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173 is limited by the fact that the Ngoni themselves were without writing, and their warlike disposition discouraged the visits of travellers who might otherwise have left some record of Ngoni life during those times. There is a considerable body of oral tradition [114] which has been reduced to writing since 1891, but for the most part these traditional tales assume a knowlege of Ngoni life and do not explicitly describe it. Our evidence for the main features of Ngoni society during this period of migration is found in three places. First we have the pattern of relationships prevailing at the present time between groups of Ngoni, between villages, chiefdoms and kingdoms. The legends which form the charter of these relations form a coherent and largely consistent corpus of traditional knowledge about events taking place within the last hundred and fifty years from which we can make reliable inferences about the internal history of the Ngoni. In particular we can gain significant information about the manner in which different groups were formed by elucidating the names applied to them. A modified form of genealogical inquiry, applied not to physiological ancestry but to links between dependant and lord and between satellite and parent villages, provides us with a reasonably trustworthy history of inter-group relations.

[114] Secondly, there is the evidence available from the numerous published accounts of Ngoni life which have been written by European and African authors. The traditions they record can be used to supplement the data gained from an analysis of present-day legends. A little information can be gleaned from the traditional histories of tribes attacked by the Ngoni.

Thirdly, we have a certain amount of comparative evidence 171 from other societies. There are about a dozen distinct Ngoni 184 kingdoms in different parts of Africa at the present time. In this 173 book we are concerned directly with only one of these groups, now situated near Fort Jameson in Northern Rhodesia. Much light is, however, thrown on its history by accounts of other Ngoni States, particularly of the Ngoni of northern Nyasaland, where the old form of society persisted longer than at Fort Jameson and where even now the changes brought about by colonial rule seem not to be so great. Accounts of Ngoni groups farther afield, and of the allied societies of the Swazi and Zulu in South Africa provide less direct evidence.

114 A few isolated events in early Ngoni history can be dated precisely. Captain Cutfield, R.N., met a group of Ngoni on 1737 November 1822 and some Ngoni warriors skirmished with the

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kingdom under Sobhuza I and Mswati and the various Ngoni States. Despite their common social and cultural origin these emergent polities had each its distinctive features. The special characteristics of Ngoni society are at least in part understandable as due to the differences in its social environment as compared with Zulu and Swazi. The Ngoni were migrants, whereas Zulu and Swazi were not. The Ngoni captured a large number of men and women of non-Nguni origin who were assimilated into the Ngoni State as individuals, whereas for the most part the Zulu and Swazi States expanded by the incorporation of existing social groups as groups, not as individuals, and these groups, if not all Nguni in origin, at least belonged to closely allied peoples.

Thus to set the Ngoni in proper perspective we must begin with a brief description of their Nguni forebears. In the eighteenth century the Nguni were grouped into a large number of small chiefdoms each containing a dominant agnatic lineage segment to which the chief belonged. Each chiefdom contained segments of other lineages, and most lineages had segments in a number of chiefdoms, one segment being dominant in its chiefdom. Lineages were exogamous, their members were graded in terms of primogeniture and the ranking of wives, and as a result of quarrels segments transferred their allegiance from one chief to another or even founded new chiefdoms. Most residential settlements were small, containing only the agnatic descendants of a living man, with their wives and children, and were divided into three sections or 'houses', led by the great, right- and left-hand wives of the polygynous head of the settlement. There were also larger homesteads containing the dwellings of chiefs and other members of the dominant lineage as well as those of many genealogically unrelated dependants. The chief was assisted by his agnatic kinsmen and by the heads of non-chiefly lineage segments and by other unrelated men whom he placed as lieutenants, or indunas, in charge of districts or responsible for specific administrative, judicial or military tasks. For fighting and hunting the men of the chiefdom were organized in divisions, each attached to a royal homestead. There was also an organization of youths into small age-sets, groupings of coevals who had been circumcised together.

At the turn of the century, with the emergence of large kingdoms, each containing many chiefdoms under the leadership of a king, the age-set system changed its form and the royal homesteads acquired greater significance. Circumcision was discontinued and the age-sets began to be organized on a national basis. Each age-set constituted a regiment in the national army, had it barracks

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561 621 701 involving perhaps between a dozen and a hundred men, whereas the Paramount Chief could, so long as the State remained intact, command the services of perhaps 10,000 warriors.

561 727 621 This unifying effect of the age-set system applied particularly to the recent captives. It appears to have been through the regimental system that recent captives, both men and women, were indoctrinated into Ngoni ways and made to feel that they, too, were Ngoni. In the residential system, recent captives were dependants rather than lords. In the age-set system there was no such distinction. Men captives were drafted into the regiment appropriate to their apparent age, and boys were enrolled with their [702] coevals. They were called upon to fight in the same way as their aristocratic comrades, and were offered the same prospects of promotion, both within the age-set system and in the segmentary organization, as a result of successful fighting. Many of the well-remembered segment heads who achieved rapid promotion after capture are described as being successful warriors.

561 796 The annual first fruits ceremony (*nkwala*) was organized on an age-set basis. Although I was not able to establish details of this ceremony, it is clear that it was the most memorable national ceremony in the year, and that it provided supernatural sanction to the cohesion of the State and of the various regiments, under the leadership of the Paramount Chief. There were dances and mock fighting between regiments, and women also fought with each other in age-set groups of some kind or other. Read states that the description of the ceremony she was given showed much similarity with the corresponding Swazi ceremony. Commentators on the [171] Swazi and Zulu ceremonies describe them as strengthening the army and the kingship and unifying the nation, by a dramatic exaggeration of the conflicts as well as the links within it, and it is probable that this was true also of the Ngoni.[9]

[167] 648 631 The Ngoni and their neighbours formed part of a wide social system, and the relationship between them was a political one. When the Ngoni moved from place to place, the area round them was vacated by its former inhabitants, so as to leave a dwelling-area for the Ngoni and a no-man's-land isolating it from other inhabited areas. These moves were forced on the indigenous people by Ngoni raids. There were no direct relations between [772] States, for there was little concerted opposition to Ngoni raiding

[9] cf. Read, 'Tradition', p. 470; Kuper *African Aristocracy*, pp. 223-5; Gluckman, 'First fruits ceremonies', pp. 30-3. The Swazi ceremony is called *incwala*, and Read's informants called it *inqwala*, but my informants had lost their click consonants.

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A wide variety of forms of organization can legitimately be spoken of as segmentary, and can be represented visually by pyramids and triangles. We may even speak of our own system of local government as containing segments (rural districts) which are characteristically grouped together to form segments of higher order (counties) and which are divided internally into segments of lower order (parishes). This *nesting* aspect of segmentation, as we may perhaps call it, by which social groups are arranged in a hierarchy one within another, is of too wide an occurrence to be useful for our purposes. Almost every known political system must be segmentary in this sense.

Nor is it the unilineal character of lineage systems which clearly marks them off from others. Until recently it was the general rule in Europe that a child took the nationality of its father, and we were therefore quite justified in talking of European nations as unilineally recruited groups. Yet we do not usually need a typology which places African lineage systems and European nations in the same category.

What then is the particular characteristic of lineage systems which significantly distinguishes them from the fixed social divisions of many states, and which they share with the Ngoni residential system? The critical characteristic seems to me to be that segmentation goes on continually. Every man (or woman) is the potential founder of a segment, and although a segment once formed tends to persist in time, more and more segments of lower and lower order are all the while being formed within it. We cannot count the number of levels at which the State is subdivided, as we can when there is a fixed hierarchy, for these points of subdivision are continually shifting with the passage of time and with change of context. It is difficult to attach labels to segments of different order or of different span, save in precisely defined situations. The magnitude of this difficulty is apparent from Fortes's elaborate descriptive armamentum, with its morphological minimal, effective minimal, nuclear, inner, medial, and maximal lineages, terms referring to successive stages in the life of a single segment, stages which occur at different times in the histories of different segments. The same difficulty arises in describing Ngoni segments, but it is not so pressing, since there was not the same differentiation of function related to degree of segmentation as is found among the Tallensi.

Because of this continuous process of segment formation, the system is governed by the same principles at all levels. A group formed in a specific way at a low level eventually becomes a high-level group, and thus at any one time the constancy of past formation

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63/ [121] is reflected in present uniformity of organization.[27] Fortes, writing on the concept of a segmentary society, says

> '. . . It means that small units of a particular form are, like cells, associated together into larger units of the same general form, and these again associated into still larger units of analogous or identical form, and so on up to the limits of the system . . . the principles operating on one level presuppose the principles operating on a lower level.'[28]

● 17/ 63/ 121 Here he is describing the egalitarian, homogeneous, stateless society of Taleland, but his description fits Ngoni society very closely. The one significant difference in this matter between Ngoni and Tale society is that Tale society goes back into the unremembered past whereas Ngoni society was founded at a known and remembered time and place. Hence a certain amount of extemporization was necessary to get the system going, to adapt Nguni social organization to the pecularities of Ngoni life, as we have noted in the relationship between the first Paramount Chief and his companions who became regional governors. Apart from this initial piece of social engineering, the system continued to perpetuate itself until checked by quite different external agencies.

In all these societies, the continually segmenting system has or had political functions. We may well ask if there are other societies in which there are continually segmenting systems lacking political functions. Gluckman has listed a large number of societies stated to possess corporate lineages, including some states as defined above. Some of these, for example the Tswana,[29] appear to organize their internal political relations not on the basis of these corporate lineages but through some separate administrative apparatus. What then is the social function of the lineage system in these societies, and is it continually segmenting? Evans-Pritchard has suggested that segmentation occurs where groups have political functions.[30] Nevertheless, among the Tswana, lineages do segment, even though they have only slight political significance, political action being largely determined by the ward organization.

We shall then take this process of continual formation of segments, which Firth calls the branching or ramifying process,[31]

[27] Fortes, *Web of kinship*, p. 341, suggests the term 'organic' to describe such a system. This word has so many other meanings that I am reluctant to use it.
[28] Fortes, *Dynamics*, p. 232.
[29] Gluckman in Mitchell and Barnes, *Lamba village*, p. 4. cf. Schapera, *Tswana law and custom*.
[30] Evans-Pritchard, 'Nandi-speaking peoples', pp. 265*f*, and 'Nuer of the Southern Sudan', p. 287.
[31] Firth, *Tikopia*, p. 371.

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as diagnostic of the presence of the kind of segmentary society in which we are interested. All the societies included by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard in their stateless category, i.e. Logoli, Tallensi and Nuer, have continually segmenting political systems. Of the societies with government, the Zulu were like the Ngoni in being a State and yet having a political system which was continually segmenting. Both of these states were organized by a segmentary system even at the highest level, so that it does not seem necessary to follow Fortes in restricting segmentary systems to only the sub-divisions of states. In Shaka's time various changes came about in Zululand, such as the concentration of the army in a central area, which lessened the importance of the segmentary organization. But in the eighteenth century large-scale relations between and within the Nguni chiefdoms were governed by the agnatic segmentary organization, that is, by the division of the people into clans, sub-clans, and lineages and by the continual transfer of allegiance by lineage segments from one chief to another. Even during the period of the Zulu empire, the continual segmentation of the constituent tribes was important in maintaining the power of the central government over them.[32]

If one of the main characteristics of the well-known African lineage systems, both in stateless societies like the Nuer, Tallensi, Logoli and Gusii, and in primitive states like the Zulu, is their political function, we may well inquire if these systems are not also one type in a more general category of political systems. Although lineage relations are essentially distinct from kinship relations, a lineage system defines political relations in the idiom of kinship. Thus in agnatic systems, the relationship between territorial groups may be expressed in terms of the relationships between founding ancestors who were brothers or fathers and sons. We have seen how among the Ngoni the relationship between captor and captive, between lord and dependant, and hence the relationship between the segments they founded, was expressed in agnatic terms. The relationship between husband and wife, lord and lady, was employed to define the relationship between the political groups they led, and in this respect the Ngoni system may be seen as taking one stage further the process employed in lineage systems, where most relationships of this kind are phrased agnatically. Among the south-eastern Bantu, however, the relationship between lineage segments founded by paternal half-brothers is defined in terms of their mothers' position as co-wives. Among some central African peoples, this process has been carried even further than

[32] Gluckman, 'Modern Zululand', pp. 147-54.

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among the Ngoni. Thus the device of perpetual kinship among the Yao, by which the holders of certain chiefly offices stand in relation to one another in a fixed arrangement of kinship positions, of Paramount Chief to son and to sister's son and to brother,[33] would seem to be an example of what is essentially the same process as that by which the dominant lineage in one part of Nuerland is conceived of as descended from a brother of the founding ancestor of another dominant lineage. Where a political relationship is expressed in terms of the connexion between husband and wife, rather than between brothers' or sisters' sons, we may find that a woman is used to embody the political relationship, and she then plays what is essentially a political role. The many wives of the Ngoni Paramount Chief were clearly used in roles of this kind. Not only were they rapporteurs for the Chief, as Deare points out,[34] but they were also living symbols of the political relationship between their segments and the State as a whole. Another central African example of this is the Lele institution of 'wife of the village' by which a village, as a group, may stand as daughter's husband or wife's parent to its chief.[35]

Wherever political relationships of this kind are embodied in persons who have private lives of their own, be they queens or sons-in-law of the village, there is bound to be some domestic and inter-personal relationship alongside the corresponding political relationship. But that should not obscure from us the essentially political role played by individuals in these positions. The analogy with the dynastic marriages of Western Europe is clear.

One of the characteristics of lineage systems and of the Ngoni residential system is that the transition from the ties of domesticity and close kinship to purely political relations is a gradual one. The same principles of organization apply at all levels, and it is gradually with the passage of time and with increasing structural separation and internal segmentation that inter-personal relations are replaced by those between groups, and actions based on sentiments of love and hate give way to those based ultimately on an appeal to force. Relations between the larger segments of a lineage, although expressed in the idiom of kinship, and although possibly explainable historically in kinship terms, are relations between political units, whereas the relationship between brothers living under the same roof is not governed by political considerations. The critical point at which relationships of increasing scale become dominantly

[33] Mitchell, 'Social organization of the Yao'
[34] Deare, 'Slave raiders', 27 April.
[35] Tew, 'Polyandry among the Lele'

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political would seem to be, for example, at the medial lineage among the Tallensi, beyond which generation differences are not recognized; and at the village among the Nuer. It seems probable that in the old Ngoni system the village was also the significant unit, above which relationships were dominantly political and below which they were largely determined by the multiplex sentiments and activities arising out of kinship and domestic association. This is certainly so in modern Ngoniland, although the same principles of organization no longer apply at all levels.

I have described elsewhere the critical position of the modern Ngoni headman, linking the political system with the network of ties of kinship and co-residence operative within the village, and similar conditions have been reported elsewhere by Gluckman and Mitchell. Above the village, whether in a state or in a stateless society, relations are in the main between enduring groups and are defined with respect to interests vital to the survival of these groups, even if expressed in the idiom of kinship.[36]

Granted the existence of primitive states with continually segmenting political systems, such as the Zulu and Ngoni, it is then possible to look at from another point of view the various African political systems for which there is adequate information. In terms of political segmentation on a unilineal basis, states like the Ngoni and Zulu are closer in form to the stateless societies of the Nuer, Tallensi, Gusii and Logoli than to the Nupe and Kede states with their administrative systems largely independent of unilineal affiliation. To document this point fully would take us beyond the scope of this book; our purpose here is merely to emphasize the importance in comparative studies of examining political structures from more than one point of view.

When talking of states, we make the convenient distinction between internal and external political relations. No such simple distinction can be made with stateless societies, for in them relations which are external to one segment are internal to the next higher segment, and yet may still legitimately be regarded as political relations. The pre-Shakan chiefdoms of Zululand formed a system similar to the Tallensi maximal lineages, and we may speak therefore in that instance of a segmentary system regulating political relations between states. Ngoni external relations were not regulated in this way, for the Ngoni were isolated and unique in a region

[36] For this section, see Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* and 'Kinship among the Nuer'; Fortes, *Web of kinship*; Wagner, *Bantu of North Kavirondo*; Mayer, *Lineage principle in Gusii society*; Gluckman, 'Analysis of a social situation' and 'Kingdom of the Zulu'; Gluckman, *et al.*, 'Village headman'.

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The genealogies which related members of one segment to those of another were made up not only of links from father to son but also from lord to dependant, and were expressed in terms of the names of segments rather than the names of the people who headed them. A man related himself to the Paramount Chief not by his own genealogy but by the pedigree of the segment to which he belonged.[39] Although the number of links in such a pedigree may have been half a dozen or more, it did not cover more than two or three generations, whereas in most lineage systems remembered genealogies cover many more generations. The present kinship nomenclature, which mainly employs words of Nsenga origin, does not group relatives on a lineage, or segmental, basis but by generation. Presumably the system of nomenclature in use during the early stages of the Ngoni migration was similar to the present Zulu system in which lineage categories are used slightly. Tribes like the Shona and Cewa, from whom many captives were taken, employ systems of nomenclature with great lineage emphasis, but this emphasis is patrilineal among the former and matrilineal among the latter. The difficulty of combining patrilineal and matrilineal categories may have prompted the emergence of a generation system of nomenclature.[40]

Another point of difference between the Ngoni and many people with lineage systems is that, other than possibly the rites associated with choosing a new village site, there seem to have been no ritual observances or ancestor cult which would have differentiated one segment from another and united the various segments of lower order within a higher one. The only ancestors to whom supplication was made were those of the Paramount Chief. They were believed to be concerned with the well-being of the whole nation, and when sacrifices were made to them, the officiants were not their agnatic descendants but the Paramount Chief's lieutenants. We may, however, regard the byre in the headquarters village as a ceremonial, rather than a ritual, centre for a large segment.

In these four respects the Ngoni residential system differed from most lineage systems. On the other hand, in respect of other criteria it was like them. A segment recognized its identity and unity in contrast to other groups; rights and obligations of segment membership were distinguished from those of kinship; segments endured in time beyond the death of their founding members;

[39] cf. Read, 'Tradition', p. 466.

[40] cf. Barnes, 'Fort Jameson Ngoni', pp. 221-5; Gluckman, 'Kinship and marriage', pp. 170-1; Holleman, *Hera kinship*, pp. 1-18; Pretorius, 'Terms of relationship', pp. 44-8.

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segments nested in the same way as lineage segments; and a segment could be referred to by the name of its original head. A residential segment was not associated with a particular locality in quite the same way as lineage segments often are among settled peoples, for even the State itself was not tied to any particular place. Within the area occupied by the State at any one time, the villages belonging to one major segment seem to have intermingled with those of another, for there were not any temporary boundaries defining major segment areas, even for those led by regional governors. But smaller segments, occupying single villages or less, may be said to have been associated with a particular locality at any one time.

Our concept of a lineage system would then require considerable stretching to include the Ngoni residential system. It seems preferable to employ the wide term 'continually segmenting systems' when speaking of this general class of system, and to distinguish within this category a number of different varieties. Lineage systems belong to one variety, the Ngoni residential system to another. These two varieties do not exhaust the category. The Nyakyusa system of continually bifurcating states appears to belong to a third variety, and there may be more.

There are other criteria which have been used to distinguish different varieties of lineage system, and which we may apply summarily to the Ngoni residential system. Despite the great importance of women in the system, it was clearly a patrilineal and not a matrilineal system. It was a graded system with a single head to each segment, like the Zulu and unlike the egalitarian Nuer. The system had a single apex, one highest segment embracing the whole society, like the Gusii and unlike the multi-capped society of the Tallensi. As a corollary of this it had sharp boundaries and did not form part of a chain of interlinked societies. There was little economic differentiation save in the control of cattle and there was, on the surface, complete cultural homogeneity imposed by the State.

The characteristic formation of rump segments is lacking in many lineage systems, but is found among the Zulu and in the Swazi lineage,[41] and perhaps more widely, although in both these societies the process does not seem to have been as greatly developed as among the Ngoni. Among the Zulu and Swazi it led to a series of homesteads or villages corresponding to successive holders of the office of lineage head or king. Among the Ngoni not only was each

[41] cf. Holleman, 'Twee-eenheidsbeginsel van die Zulu' and 'Zulu *isigodi*'; Bryant, *Dictionary*, pp. 729*f*, s.v. *isizinda*; and Kuper, *African Aristocracy*, pp. 40*f*.

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Mashanga. Swann appears to have believed Mpezeni sincerely wished to stop raiding into the Protectorate although his people continued to do so.[88]

The cleavage within the tribe between Chief and people was attributed by Wiese to the large number of captives who had been incorporated.[89] We may well ask whether there had not always been considerable fluidity in the distribution of power among the different branches of the royal house and their supporters. After the death of Zwangendaba there was factional fighting, and at least once on the march north, about 1840, there was a purge in which the original members of the tribe, presumably Ndandwe by origin, killed off many of the more recently incorporated Tsonga who had been promoted at their expense.[90] These struggles show clearly that the formal arrangement of segments within the residential system did not preclude struggles for power within that system. The decline in power of Mpezeni and the rise of his heir must indeed be seen as part of the normal operation of the system rather than the result of manipulation or of unusual external conditions.

Wiese anticipated that there would be fighting on the death of Mpezeni.[91] Some idea of the way in which the fight would have gone in the new circumstances of European contact is given by Wiese's statement, in 1891, that Nzermane would not submit to Nsingu on Mpezeni's death and that he would be the best successor as far as the interests of Portugal were concerned.[92] Later, Deare remarked that the 'king had two other sons, younger than Tsinko, named Zamane and Madzimai, whom I never saw, but I learnt much about them and had fixed my eye on the former for the succession if anything happened'.[93] When British troops had already begun their advance on Ngoni, Manning, their commander, hoped that the tribe would split into factions, some of which would side with him.[94]

Fighting between rival claimants for the throne was likely even without external backing for one candidate. We have only to turn to Zululand for an analogous situation in which there was fighting

[88] Swann's report for 1896, *B.C.A.G.*, iv, 7 (15 April 1897), p. 1.

[89] Wiese, 'Geschichte', p. 187.

[90] See p. 19. Elmslie, *Wild Ngoni*, p. 24; Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 23; cf. Young, *History*, p. 112, who reverses the role played by witch-finders in this incident.

[91] As reported by Warton in June 1896, cited by Poole, *Native tribes*, p. 13.

[92] Wiese, 'Expedição', p. 493.

[93] Deare, 'Slave raiders', 11 May. In modern spelling, Nsingu, Nzermane, and Madzimawi.

[94] 282, fo. 39.

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between rival heirs even while the occupant of the throne was still alive. The brothers Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi fought for the heirship while their father Mpande was still chief.[86]

The apparent ineffectiveness of Mpezeni's rule may well have been due to the increasing segmentation of the State as it expanded and to the growing differentiation of interest between one major segment and another. As it happened, there was no civil war and the tribe did not split, at least not in these terms. A cleavage in the royal house did reveal itself later, in 1903, after British rule had begun, when Madzimawi tried to take the name of Zwangendaba and was opposed by the supporters of Mpezeni II, son of Nsingu. But by then the form of the State was already determined by political forces other than the balanced opposition of segments. It is significant of the changed situation that Madzimawi did not send his armed followers against the new Mpezeni to challenge his succession. Instead he applied to the Native Commissioner for permission to take the name of his grandfather.[87]

Instead of dividing in civil war the whole country united against the European interlopers. Mpezeni alone tried to protect his friend Wiese. The effective cleavage was not between rival heirs but between the Paramount Chief and his people. He was now a man in his sixties who seemed not to want war and who perhaps benefited more than his people from the presents made by Europeans. The Ngoni people continued to believe and teach that fighting was the proper occupation for men. An attempt to exploit this cleavage was made in 1897 when Wiese, perhaps remembering his earlier attempt to serve Portugal and Britain simultaneously, offered his services to the B.S.A. Company. Forbes thought that if Wiese was given troops, he would be supported by Mpezeni, who would then be in a position to hold Nsingu and the Ngoni warriors in check.[88] But this plan was overtaken by events.

We saw in the previous chapter that the organization of the State was based on warfare, not only on war as an activity bringing prestige to successful warriors but also on war as a method of recruitment to the ever-widening segments of the residential system. Without warfare to eliminate the unsuccessful and to bring promotion and dependants to those who survived, the system could not keep going. It was in no sense inevitable that the Fort Jameson Ngoni and the British should fight; we have only to turn to the

[86] Gluckman, 'Kingdom of the Zulu', pp. 35-6, and *Malinowski's Sociological Theories*, pp. 19-20; Krige, *Social system of the Zulu*, p. 19.
[87] See pp. 139 *f.*
[88] Poole, *Native tribes*, p. 14.

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for a few heaps of stones hidden among the trees on the tops of hills. People visit back and forth freely, except for the control imposed at the customs barrier on the one lorry road. Many people grow vegetables in Nyasaland, where there is more land, and sell them in Northern Rhodesia, where there is a better market.

While this territorial proximity gives rise to a multitude of ties linking individuals across the border, it does not lead to new political relations between the counties with a common boundary. Such political relations as do persist are survivals from the old order. Although the formal structure of the Native Court system, as determined by the Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia Administrations, does not permit it, cases sometimes come on appeal from the Nyasaland counties to Mpezeni. There is official visiting between chiefs across the border, and when the Paramount Chief is short of food he may ask the Nyasaland chiefs to send him a few baskets of maize. But despite the nearness of the Nyasaland chiefs to Mpezeni in spatial terms, their political interests lie mainly in the opposite direction. They are the only two Ngoni chiefs in that district of Nyasaland and most of the chiefs whom they meet are Cewa. Their Administration is separate from that in Northern Rhodesia, their laws are different, and they look towards Zomba rather than Lusaka as the seat of Administrative power. We have noted how Mpezeni I contemplated moving into Nyasaland in 1897. As late as 1922, when the Native Reserve scheme was under discussion, Mpezeni II made some preliminary soundings on moving across the border, but already by 1946 such projects were overshadowed by the prospects of federation for the two countries of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

The people of the two Nyasaland counties are subject to the same general influences as are their Northern Rhodesia neighbours in such matters as increasing dependence on an exchange economy and the development of a cognatic or omni-directional kinship system in which links can be traced through spouses as well as through fathers or mothers. Yet even in economic activity there are significant differences. In Nyasaland, Africans grow tobacco for sale, while the Ngoni in Northern Rhodesia are not able to do so; recruiting for the Rand gold-mines is allowed in Nyasaland and prohibited in most of Northern Rhodesia, including the Fort Jameson area.

The annual meetings of the African Provincial Council of the Eastern Province are attended by representatives from each tribe in the province, two people from Fort Jameson township, the Provincial Commissioner and sometimes a representative of the

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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(a) *'Those from the south'*

These were the descendants of the leaders of the two main Ngoni groups represented by the two Ngoni kingdoms, with their followers, who left Natal during the wars of Shaka. They were South-eastern Bantu of Nguni stock, and when they were first encountered by Europeans in Nyasaland, the Europeans called them Zulus and spoke of their language as Zulu. Ngoni informants in the 1930's who were regarded as most reliable repudiated their relationship with the Zulu, and always referred to their ethnic origin as a people of Swazi stock. Y. M. Cibambo whose knowledge of Ngoni traditions was unrivalled, said in his book *My Ngoni of Nyasaland*—'Very many of them [the Ngoni] came from Swaziland, which is north of Zululand'.[1] A nostalgic refrain occurred in more than one of their traditional songs:

> Come let us go to Swaziland
> Where the people die fat.[2]

Cultural affinities between the Ngoni in Nyasaland and the people now living in Swaziland and, to a lesser degree, with the Zulu, will be examined in several chapters of this book. In the chapter on clan descent names in Part III, we shall compare the clan names called Swazi by the Ngoni with the lists of clan names given by Bryant in *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* [3] and with the list given by Kuper, in *An African Aristocracy*,[4] of the Swazi and pre-Swazi clans. The military organization of the Ngoni, the age-set system which formed part of it, and other cultural features which will be discussed in Chapter III of this section, all show a general cultural affinity with the peoples of the northern Nguni group of the South-eastern Bantu.

The separation of the Ngoni group from the parent stock, which took place at about the same time as the Ndebele and the Shangaan groups fought their way north, occurred before the Swazi and Zulu kingdoms took final form. It is more correct, therefore, to say that Ngoni cultural affinities were with the northern Nguni group as a whole than to say they were off-shoots of either the Zulu or the Swazi. The Ngoni themselves used the designation 'Swazi' for the people with clan descent names whose ancestors left the south with the original party. Some of the older men remembered their fathers and grandfathers speaking of their clan as having belonged to the Ntungwa group, the Mtetwa group, the Msane group, before the departure of the Ngoni took place. This differentiation into pre-Swazi tribal and clan groupings was not in the 1930's one to which the Ngoni gave much attention. In talking about their southern origin it was the Swazi connexion which they emphasized.

[1] Cibambo, Y. M. *My Ngoni of Nyasaland*. Lutterworth Press, 1942, p. 8.
[2] Read, M. 'Songs of the Ngoni People.' *Bantu Studies*, March 1937, p. 10.
[3] Bryant, A. T. *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*. Longmans, 1929, pp. 681–97.
[4] Kuper, H. *An African Aristocracy*. O.U.P., 1947, p. 233.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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in the political organization. Some of these officials were also members of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, but many were not. The officials served the Paramount in his court and his administration, and also the chiefs, and formed the lines of communication between them. This created a network of relationships between the Paramount and the chiefs at the top level, and between the chiefs and the village headmen under them at the lower level. From this network were excluded, in the northern kingdom, all the *alumuzana* and, in the central kingdom, all those *alumuzana* who were not chiefs. In the two kingdoms the *alumuzana* exercised unofficial control over a varying number of villages, and were inclined to assert their social superiority because they were excluded from official recognition.

The foundations of the political structure within which the ruling aristocracy operated were a series of related institutions which will be described and analysed later in the book, but which must be referred to here, partly in order to explain the terminology used. The South-eastern Bantu, whose culture the Ngoni brought with them, had an institution in all important villages known as 'houses', which was a grouping of huts and of the wives owning them round the hut of one or more of the leading women. This institution, with its variations among the southern and northern Nguni people, was described by Mrs. Hoernlé in the chapter on 'Social Organization' in *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*.[1] The Ngoni institution of houses had developed from the basic pattern among the South-eastern Bantu into an independent form. In the first place it was only found in relation to the Paramount, the chiefs and leading men of the royal clan, and the *alumuzana*. It did not, as in South Africa, form the basic pattern of all villages in the Ngoni kingdoms. Where, as in most villages owned by *alumuzana*, mixed ethnic groups lived together, the house system existed only for the head of the clan, his brothers and his successor. It was specifically an Ngoni institution in the cultural and social sense. In the second place, the terms 'right-hand' and 'left-hand' house, common among the South-eastern Bantu, were not used by the Ngoni in the 1930's. The two terms they used were the 'big house' and the '*gogo* house', and I propose to use these terms here. The principle behind the use of these terms was that the big house was the one from which the heir should come to succeed the Paramount, the chief, or the *mulumuzana*. The *gogo* house was the one which was responsible for maintaining tradition and performing ritual.

Another institution, closely related to that of the houses, was the *lusungulu* and *gogo* villages. The Paramounts, the chiefs, and the leading *alumuzana*, when they succeeded their father after his death, moved out of his village and made their own new village, or took their households

[1] Schapera, I. (ed.). *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*. Routledge, 1937, chap. IV.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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In the 1930's, in the villages of the *ahumuzana*, individuals with the same clan name formed patrilineal groups of an extended family type. The original *ahumuzana* were the leaders of groups of persons bearing their clan descent name, who crossed the Zambesi under Zwangendaba or Mputa. In Part II we shall see how these *ahumuzana* were settled in the Ngoni kingdoms round the royal villages, with the result that a group of villages of mixed ethnic origin came to be associated with the village regarded as the head village of a clan. Reference is made from time to time in this study to clan heads, and to the head villages of certain clans. There was no head of a Swazi or trans-Zambesi clan who was not regarded as a *mulumuzana*. On the ground that his ancestor crossed the Zambesi with his wives and followers, the head of such a clan was always given that title. In addition to the head village of a *mulumuzana* there were a number of other villages connected with the clan, created partly by the working of the *lusungulu* system of village segmentation, and partly by other sections of the larger villages moving off to make new gardens. The association of a number of villages owned by individuals with the same descent name was due to the original settlement of the *alumuzana* who were given land at varying distances from the royal village. When the Ngoni spoke of 'clan areas' this was the connotation they gave to the term. Village censuses showed that small family groups bearing the same descent name were scattered widely over a number of villages in several of the chiefs' areas. There was, however, in connexion with each clan an area of concentration round the head village where a number of families and individuals with that descent name were living. These were sometimes referred to as clan areas, using the name of the clan with the prefix *ma*, meaning the people of that clan, in central Ngoniland, and with the prefix *u*, meaning the land of the clan, in the northern kingdom.

(c) *The ritual pattern*

In the rest of this study there will be descriptions and analyses of Ngoni marriage and funeral rites, of the puberty rites carried out for each boy and girl, but not in groups in initiation schools, and of the rituals associated with the ownership of cattle and with the ancestor cult. The marriage and funeral rites have South-eastern Bantu affinities, and so has the ritual associated with cattle-keeping and the ancestor cult. The northern Ngoni had a tradition that circumcision was practised among them when they left Natal, and that it was given up while they were in Tanganyika. Giving the head-ring (*cidlodlo*) to the men who were allowed to leave the regiments and settle as married men in civilian life was another ritual of southern origin which the Ngoni gave up soon after the kingdoms were established in Nyasaland.[1] The

[1] The early Europeans in Nyasaland reported that head-rings were worn by all the senior Ngoni men.

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The distinctiveness of Ngoni institutions, so often emphasized by the older men and by the early travellers in Nyasaland, was due to cultural affinities with the South-eastern Bantu. The attached table sets out those social and cultural elements in the Ngoni kingdoms which were most distinct from parallel features among the neighbouring peoples, and which had obvious affinity with South-eastern Bantu cultures. The main Ngoni cultural elements have already been referred to in this chapter and will be further discussed in the rest of this study. The corresponding elements among the local peoples are based partly on the earlier sources quoted by Tew and partly on local informants and my own observations. In collecting information about clans, the *mbumba* group consisting of a man with his sisters' children, and the girls' initiation schools, I had no direct contacts with any except Cewa sources.

Variations in cultural conformity among the Ngoni

In the Ngoni kingdoms among families with Swazi and trans-Zambesi clan descent names there was considerable variation in the degree to which they maintained Ngoni institutions and practised Ngoni cultural forms. The anthropologist was constantly aware that the time element was an important factor in the consolidation of Ngoni practices and in the attitudes developed towards Ngoni culture among the individuals in the different generations. The Ngoni in both kingdoms spoke of the 'older generations' (*mibadwo wa kale*), 'the middle gen. .tions' (*mibadwo wa mpkati*), and 'the present generation' (*mibadwo wa tsopano*). The first had grown to adulthood before the Europeans came, and were the older senior men and women in the 1930's; the second had been affected by European missionaries, traders, and officials while they were young men and women; the third had never known anything but European contacts and many had grown up in European schools. The senior Ngoni of the older generation often expressed the sentiment: *zatha zonse tsopano* (everything is finished now). They included in that saying the regrets of the older Ngoni for their former independence, and their resentment at the domination of European rule and European culture. It is idle to speculate what cultural changes might have taken place in the Ngoni kingdoms if European influence had been postponed another twenty to thirty years. Nevertheless it is a vital factor in assessing Ngoni culture that the kingdoms had barely twenty years of independent existence before the Europeans began to penetrate Nyasaland. The older Ngoni looked back on their former independent existence as a golden age in which they were spreading Ngoni customs and culture as well as exercising political supremacy. It is difficult to believe that this was wholly true, in view of the extensive cultural interchange going on in the country as a whole. It is, however, possible that wider acceptance of Ngoni cultural elements was prevented by the advent of the Europeans, in so far as cultural institutions and political dominance were closely

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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allowed to marry and settle down in their villages.[1] Since he also had the sole right of forming a new regiment of young men and giving it a name, he controlled the intake to the army as well as the discharge of seasoned warriors.

The big war *induna* served directly under the Paramount. Associated with him were other subordinate war leaders or *izinduna*, one of whom was always at the head of each regiment. Considerable emphasis was laid by Cibambo and other Ngoni informants on the essentially military character, in pre-European days, of the office and function of the *izinduna*, who were officials serving the whole kingdom. We shall see in Chapters III, IV and V how the term *induna* was also used for civil officials at the royal village and in the courts, as well as for the men in charge of sections of a village and of houses.

The account of the mobilization of the army shows that the Ngoni had changed the system of military barracks concentrated about the capital, described by Gluckman as typical of the Zulu military organization and by Kuper for the Swazi. Gluckman said that the chiefs assembled their people in territorial, not age, divisions, and that the age regiments belonged to the king alone and lived in or near his capital.[2] In pre-European days the Ngoni, according to Cibambo and to other informants, had in their armies territorial divisions as well as age regiments, and there was no concentration of young warriors by age regiments round the Paramount's village.[3]

When a summons to war went forth, the warriors in the territory of each chief or *mulumuzana* assembled at his head village as a *libandla*. This included the warriors from the outlying villages and from the head village. Cibambo's use of the term *libandla* emphasized that it was a territorial unit, divided into *mabuto* (which he called sections) on the basis of age.

When each *libandla* arrived at the Paramount's village ready for warfare, the different age groups within it joined up with their parallel age groups from other *mabandla* to form regiments. The Ngoni term for these national regiments was *mabuto*, the same term as that used for the age divisions of the *mabandla*. Old men who had been warriors in their youth expressed to me many times their immense pride in their own *libuto*, and it had for them something of the tradition and prestige of a famous school. They would recite the names of other *mabuto*, beginning with their own as the most recent, and going backwards through ten or more regimental names to those who had crossed the Zambesi with

[1] Cibambo in the text spoke of warriors wearing the head-ring. The usual practice, according to informants, was to give the head-ring at the end of service in the army. Cibambo may have been referring to former warriors with a head-ring putting on war-dress for a ceremony.

[2] Gluckman, M. 'The Kingdom of the Zulu', in *African Political Systems*, 1940, p. 31.

[3] One example of a concentration of young men was reported at the village of the Queen Mother in the central kingdom in 1898 in *The Central African Times*, see Memorandum XVI, International African Institute, 1938, p. 18.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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from the campaign and the purification of those who had killed any of the enemy.

Cibambo and other Ngoni informants had no idea of the size of the Ngoni armies beyond emphasizing that they were 'very big and very strong'. Evidence was forthcoming, however, from early European sources on the size of the armies which, though it can only have been based on guess-work, nevertheless gave an indication of the numbers involved. Dr. Elmslie referred in 1878 to having seen in the previous year an army of 10,000 of the northern Ngoni which went out in June and returned in September.[1] In the *B.C.A. Gazette* of December 1894, reference was made to the armies of the central Ngoni which were said to be, at the time of their last raids, 50,000 strong. In the *Blantyre District Note Book* there was an entry of 1884, giving no numbers for the army but reporting on the raid on Blantyre in that year when the 'vanguard of the army was composed entirely of young men in their first vigour of manhood, who were said to have marched 50 miles in half a day'. From such scanty references by Europeans, it is clear that the Ngoni armies in the field consisted of large numbers, were highly organized, and trained to feats of endurance as well as in fighting skill. The Blantyre reference also brought out the authority of the big war *induna*, who was presented with cloth by the Moir brothers of the African Lakes Corporation as a bribe not to attack the Blantyre area again, and kept his promise.

Objectives in warfare

Dr. Kuper wrote of the Swazi military kingdom that wars were waged 'to extend the boundaries, to retain tribal independence and to secure internal solidarity'.[2] After the Ngoni kingdoms were set up in Nyasaland, warfare had the same objectives with the additional one of bringing back captives and cattle. In north Nyasaland Dr. Elmslie, in the reference already cited, wrote that, after the four months' campaigning the Ngoni armies returned 'laden with spoil in slaves, cattle and ivory'. Up to the coming of the Europeans many of the raids and wars took place in the hope of annexing additional territory. Dr. Elmslie wrote in 1878 of the Ngoni dominating an area of 30,000 square miles in north Nyasaland from the lake-shore to the Luangwa river. In central Nyasaland the *B.C.A. Gazette* of 1894 reported that the Ngoni Paramount ruled from the Lintippe river near Lilongwe to the Luvubwe river south of the Kirk Range. The chief challenge to Ngoni security in the northern kingdom came from the Bemba, and in the central kingdom from a combination of Yao and Arabs. Dr. Laws recorded in 1886 that the Ngoni, in their final victorious campaign against the Bemba, had

[1] Elmslie, W. A. *Among the Wild Ngoni*. Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, 1899, p. 79.
[2] Kuper, H. 'The Development of the Military Organisation in Swaziland.' *Africa*, Vol. X, No. 2, p. 176.

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CHAPTER II

CLANS

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In Chapter III of Part I we saw that the Ngoni clans had a particular role in their political and social organization. These clans had certain characteristics which distinguished them from the clans of the local peoples, and which they had in common with the Nguni group of the South-eastern Bantu. The use of the clan name in address and in thanking for gifts, the strict exogamy in the clans, and the hierarchy of rank among the clans—these were all of southern origin. Mrs. Hoernlé,[1] writing of the social organization among the northern Nguni, said that the clan was called *isibongo*, 'a word referring more particularly to the name of the group'. The Ngoni spoke of their clan name as their *cibongo*, and they generally added 'that is my thanking name'. Dr. Kuper [2] used the term clan for 'the furthest extension of kinsmen traced through the father or the mother'. She referred also to the sub-division of clans among the Swazi—a process of fission by which a section of a clan was known by a double name, so that the Nkosi clan became the Nkosi Gininza, the Nkosi Mamba, with other sub-divisions. These divisions eventually became recognized as separate clans, so that marriage could take place between them, and so that the heads of the sub-clans could achieve independence from the head of the original clan. It is possible that some development of this kind took place after the Ngoni left Natal for, as we shall see later in this chapter, there were among the Ngoni a number of clan names which they said emphatically were Swazi but which were not among those noted by Dr. Kuper [3] or by Bryant.[4] In tracing the early history of the Swazi Dr. Kuper [5] distinguished between two periods: the first, when small patrilineal clans were migrating southwards, and the second, when rival clan heads became petty chiefs having non-clansmen among their subjects. At the beginning of their northward march Zwangendaba and Ngwana, in addition to being military leaders, were petty chiefs of this type, each including among his followers members of his own clan as well as others.

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The Swazi became a heterogeneous nation composed of people from over 70 clan descent groups, of which one-fifth were true Swazi, one-seventh were prior inhabitants of the territory, and the rest were migrants into the kingdom. The clan hierarchy which was part of the structure of the nation showed, as Dr. Kuper [6] pointed out, 'some connexion between the rank of a clan and the period at which it was

[1] Hoernlé, A. W., 'Social organisation', in *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 80.
[2] Op. cit., p. 111.
[3] Kuper, H. *An African Aristocracy*, p. 11.
[4] *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, pp. 681–97.
[5] Kuper, H. op. cit., p. 11.
[6] ibid. p. 113.

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incorporated into the nation'. This, as we saw in Chapter I of Part I, was what took place in the Ngoni kingdoms. By the time they settled in Nyasaland, a hierarchical relationship had been built up between the clans based on the length of time they had formed part of the Ngoni kingdom. As the Swazi had their true Swazi, 'those found ahead', and late comers, so the Ngoni had their 'Swazi' clans, others from across the Zambesi, those who joined from this side, and the local peoples.

Dr. Kuper [1] summarized her description of the Swazi clan hierarchy by saying that it was 'neither precise nor static . . . a certain degree of mobility is recognized amongst the élite'. The Ngoni too had their own ways of adjusting a somewhat rigid system to suit their needs in spite of their recognition of the ranking of clans, and the fact that in the 1930's the kingdoms were ruled by an aristocracy. As among the Swazi, officials were appointed who did not belong to Swazi or trans-Zambesi clans. Much importance was attached, as also among the Swazi, to 'marrying up' and a number of instances of this were recorded, particularly in the central kingdom. In such cases a man, when explaining who he was, often gave the name of his mother as well as that of his father in order to impress upon the inquirer that he came from Swazi stock on one side, though his clan name, being his father's, did not show it.

Since some discussion of clans comes into every section of this book it will be useful to summarize here the main characteristics of the Ngoni clans in the two kingdoms. We shall be referring exclusively to the Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, except when others are specifically mentioned.

Each clan was primarily a group of people with a common name. The families bearing this name might be found throughout the Ngoni kingdoms and states, in the towns and elsewhere, as the census figures quoted in Chapter I, Part I show. Their kinship was recognized firstly through clan exogamy, and secondly through the fact that when Ngoni people met a fellow clansman, they greeted him with particular warmth and both individuals were prepared to render each other mutual service. I met a number of the younger educated Ngoni who set out on a journey in Nyasaland, or to Northern or Southern Rhodesia, with the express purpose of looking for fellow clansmen, getting hospitality from them, and inviting them to visit Nyasaland and receive return hospitality. I was present at one or two such meetings in Nyasaland between Ngoni from the two kingdoms and the conversation began by establishing what branch of the Moyo or Gama clan they belonged to, and where the head village was situated. Within each kingdom each clan had a head village, and the head of that village was the head of the clan. In most of the Swazi clans the head of the clan was acknowledged as a *mulumuzana*. This correlation between being head of a Swazi clan and being a

[1] ibid. p. 233.

CHAPTER III

HOUSES

361 171 823 WRITING of the social organization of the northern Nguni among the South-eastern Bantu, Mrs. Hoernlé[1] referred to three divisions of the typical village: the *indlunkulu* section where the principal hut was that of the mistress of the village; the *ikhohlo* section on the left-hand side of this hut, and the *inqadi* section on the right. The terminology used by the northern Nguni expressed right and left hand from the point of view of someone looking up from the gate of the kraal. I found that among the Ngoni they used right and left the other way as if the person were at the top of the kraal looking down at the gate, and I have adopted their usage.

171 361 554 Ngoni villages, which were royal villages or the head villages of Swazi and trans-Zambesi clans, also had a tripartite division into houses related to leading women, as we saw in the village plan in Chapter III of Part I, but there was a major difference between them and the northern Nguni grouping described by Mrs. Hoernlé. In Ngoni villages the *indlunkulu*, the hut at the head of the kraal, was occupied by the mother of the owner of the village, who had 'come out' with him from his father's village. In the right-hand section of the huts round the kraal was the hut of the owner's big wife, and on the left the hut of his next important wife. These three huts, representing three houses, were the focal points of the main divisions of the village. In fact in most villages the owner of the *indlunkulu* had the huts of other widows of her late husband beside her on each side, and the *cigodlo*, or section where the sons of the owner of the village lived, spread over a wide area behind the *indlunkulu* and behind the huts of the two chief wives. The plan used in Chapter III of Part I was necessarily simplified in order to bring out the main points. The grouping of huts in typical Ngoni villages showed varying degrees of elaboration, and it was not always easy at first to trace their connexions with the houses.

592 571 Houses in the Ngoni kingdoms could be considered as divisions of the village, though they did not always cover all the divisions. If we look at the membership of a house, as it was illustrated in a typical Ngoni village, it is clear that it had in it three elements connected by ties of kinship, affinity or association with the owner of the house, who was either a wife or a mother of the male owner of the village. The kinship group related to the *indlunkulu* comprised the male owner of the village, his mother and classificatory mothers with his brothers who had joined him. In the big house and in the second house of his wives the kinship

[1] *op. cit.* p. 83.

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binding contract. In theory at least the girl left her family for good once the agreed *lobola* was handed over, and the responsibility for adjustment to the family she had entered was hers, first as wife and then as mother.

Investigation of the terminology associated with the Ngoni concept of family immediately poses problems of relating group structure to individual and group relationships. Dr. Kuper did not refer to any single term for family among the Swazi. The nearest was the term *umuti* used for homestead[1] which covered a recognized leader and his dependents, in terms of common residence, mutual relations and economic activities. The Cewa term *banja*,[2] widely used in Nyasaland in the 1930's to translate 'family', in its general use was more akin to the Swazi *umuti* since it denoted the relationships of a group of people to one man, and their common residence in a single village or a section of a village. *Banja* was used to express relationship to one man by kinship and marriage, but when it was used among the central Ngoni it also applied to other individuals, such as his age mates and the descendants of his father's former captives who lived in the same village. Another Cewa term *mbumba* was used in two distinct senses. The common use was to express the relationship of one man with his sisters and their children who inherited his position and his property and looked to him for assistance. A much less common use of the term was found sometimes in central Nyasaland and occasionally in north Nyasaland to cover the group of a man and his children and his brothers and their children—a patrilineal concept of a kinship group which was usually but not always associated with common residence.

There was one major difference between the Ngoni concept inherent in their use of *banja* and that of the Cewa and other matrilineal peoples. When an important man or woman died among the Cewa, someone always 'entered their place' in the kinship system, and this acquiring of a new position involved a shift in actual relationships and in terminology throughout the group of kin. There was no such change among the Ngoni in the use of kinship terms. When a man or woman among the Ngoni entered a dead person's place it was in order to perform his functions and not to assume the dead person's kinship relationships.

The village lay-out in different types of Ngoni village illustrates the way in which family grouping could be recognized in the sharing of the same hut, in the grouping of huts, and in the relations with neighbouring villages. Later in this chapter illustrations will be given from the northern and central Ngoni kingdoms to show how certain patterns of residential grouping on a family basis were evolving from the divisions of mixed tribal groups characteristic of the former large villages of pre-European days. The general tendency in northern Ngoniland was to

[1] op. cit. p. 36.
[2] Scott and Hetherwick in their dictionary translate *banja*: house, home, household, family.

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her daughters had died, and the herd of cattle was either inherited by the senior daughter's eldest son or divided among the sons of different daughters. Cewa informants said that quarrels constantly arose over the ownership of cattle, and two modern developments—the spread of *utengwa*[1] marriage and of a patrilineal form of *mbumba* with its repercussions on cattle acquisition and disposal—caused further tensions in Cewa society.

The role which cattle played in Ngoni social life partly depended on the structure and inter-relationships of the Ngoni social groups. The house and the family within the larger village unit were so organized that group ownership and group disposal of cattle caused no permanent friction. There were arguments about the disposal of cattle, but they were temporary and relatively trivial. The strength of tradition in the concept of ownership, and in the values and attitudes inherent in cattle-owning and keeping, was firmly established and was related to modern needs by the ingenuity of the Ngoni in manipulating traditional practices to suit new situations. Cattle therefore strengthened the integration of existing social units, and helped to preserve that unity and cohesion in Ngoni society which the ancestors were said to commend and to wish for. On this plane of conformity to a required pattern, cattle influenced the living and their behaviour. They also, through the structure and function of the houses, belonged to the spirit who was guarded in a particular house. As we shall see in Chapter IV, the ritual formula of address to the ancestor at the sacrifice of a beast was always 'Here is your beast . . . Here is your meat.' The living and the dead were joined therefore in the common ownership of a herd or part of a herd. The actual practices in social and ritual life where cattle were concerned, and the ideas and concepts from which the practices arose, will take up most of this chapter and form the necessary prelude to the further analysis of the ancestor cult.

Ownership of cattle and care of herds

'The war of the cattle-tax' was the name given in the central kingdom to the installation of dipping tanks in the 1930's and the levying of a tax of a shilling per head of cattle on all cattle-owners. The attempt by the Government to focus responsibility for dipping and to collect the taxes due brought out clearly the difficulties of applying English conceptions of ownership to the Ngoni. In the English meaning of the word ownership, a man can claim as his possession cattle which he has bought or inherited, and their offspring. This individual ownership means that he alone has the right to sell the animals or their milk, to regard the profits from such sale as his, and at any time to kill an animal for meat. He can will them to his descendants or to anyone he chooses after his

[1] Marriages in which the man took his wife to live in his village, but did not give *lobola* for her.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

death, or he can give them to anyone he likes during his lifetime. Hence individual acquisition in the English sense involves the legal right of individual disposal; the individual possession of profits from such disposal; and the individual responsibility for complying with any regulations concerning cattle, such as inoculation, slaughter for foot-and-mouth disease, and testing of milk.

In Ngoni usage the concept of ownership involved the acquisition and disposal of, and the responsibility for, cattle, but behind this apparent similarity of terms lay a wide difference in interpretation. Cattle could be acquired by inheritance, by natural increase, by *lobola*, as payment in a court case, as a gift, or by purchase. Formerly cattle could be acquired in warfare and raiding, but never by purchase. With this exception of buying cattle for cash, the methods of acquiring cattle had not altered since the Ngoni settled in Nyasaland. In pre-European days in the Ngoni kingdoms only the Paramount, the subordinate chiefs, the *alumuzana* and the big *izinduna* possessed cattle. Having a herd marked the owner as a leading member of a leading clan, or as a famous warrior of a lesser clan whose distinguished war service had been rewarded by the Paramount giving him cattle, or allowing him to keep some of those he had taken from the enemy. New herds were formed when a Paramount or a chief moved out of his father's village and set up his own *lusungulu* village, taking with him one or more of his mothers who, together with his big wife, set up houses in the new village, and these houses were allotted cattle from the former undivided herd. Another way in which a herd was divided was when a big *induna* in charge of the house of a leading wife of a Paramount or a chief built a kraal for the cattle of that house near his own huts, and added to that herd any cattle which he acquired. Large Ngoni villages in pre-European days usually had one or more kraals on the edge of the village, as well as the big central one. When the large villages broke up and the *induna* moved off to found his own village, he still took care of the cattle of that house. If the house was one where an ancestral spirit was guarded, a successor was always appointed to live in the hut and guard the spirit. Hence the relationship of the house, its spirit guardian, its cattle and the *induna* in charge continued, though the personalities changed through death and for other reasons. This explained how in the 1930's cattle were found in one kraal which were said to belong to a house or a woman guardian of a spirit miles away in another village. Sometimes they were described as the cattle of a man long dead.

It is clear, therefore, that the Ngoni methods of acquiring cattle and building up herds did not result in a concept of individual ownership. Cattle were not willed from father to son, but the son of a Paramount or a chief, when he made his new *lusungulu* village, had the right to receive and to take with him the cattle of his mother's house; and the head of the *gogo* village who stayed behind also received and looked after the

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

Cattle in the ancestor cult

The Ngoni, unlike the Swazi as described by Dr. Kuper,[1] had no clear ideas about the life after death as lived by their immediate ancestors with whom they had associated in their lifetime. They did not, as the Swazi did, picture them living somewhere surrounded with cattle and other familiar creatures and objects. The importance of bringing the spirit back (*ukubuyisa idlozi*) to the house where it would be cared for signified two main things for them. The first was the continuous association of the spirit of the dead with the living persons in the community to which he had belonged, through the individuals belonging to the house, the actual hut where the sacrificial vessels were kept, and the cattle which belonged to the house. The other significant point was that contact with the returned spirit, and through him with the spirits of more remote ancestors, could only be established in the village containing the cattle of the house to which the dead man had belonged.

We shall be examining some aspects of the ritual of addressing the ancestral spirits in a later chapter of this section. Here we shall establish three constituent parts of the ancestor cult in which cattle were essential links between those taking part in the cult and the spirits whom they addressed.

The first part was the group of ceremonies which took place at death, at the burial, at the first ritual shaving and at bringing back the spirit. A text by Lopati Nzunga (see Chapter IV, p. 200) illustrates how three parts of a beast—the skin, the kidney fat (*nseso*) and the gall bladder (*nyongo*)—were considered essential for Ngoni burial. It was interesting to find in Blantyre among educated Ngoni who were Christians and occupied clerical and commercial posts, that they had given up the cow-skin for wrapping the corpse and substituted a coffin. But they admitted confidentially that in most Ngoni funerals the use of the *nseso* and the *nyongo* was customary. After the burial the ritual shaving, shared in by all who attended the funeral, was accompanied by the killing of a beast and the consumption of its meat, though with no ritual significance beyond its association with the purification of the mourners and their integration as a group. From six to twelve months later the second shaving and the bringing back of the spirit was also accompanied by killing a beast and eating its meat. These ceremonies expressed the sense of loss felt for the human person who had died, the sorrow of the mourners, their successive acts of purification which served to bring them together, and the final bringing of the spirit to live among them again. As we have seen, each stage of the death and mourning rites was accompanied by the eating of a beast or the use of certain parts of a beast. The cattle of the house to which the dead person belonged were used to bury him or her, to strengthen the mourners, and to reintegrate the spirit with the living community.

[1] Kuper, H. *An African Aristocracy*, p. 186.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

Dr. Kuper called the diviners among the Swazi 'the most powerful and respected specialists operating in both individual and national situations'.[1] I found that among the Ngoni also they were greatly respected once they had established their reputation for prophecy and diagnosis. Except on the occasions when they were called upon to carry out their functions the majority of diviners whom I saw in the 1930's lived in relative seclusion, and had no outward signs of power in any political or economic sense, though in the past some of the 'prophets' had also been warriors and leaders. Socially they were always shown great honour when they came in response to a call, or when they went visiting on non-professional occasions. They were addressed in a respectful tone of voice, given a mat to sit on, and village noises around them were hushed. They were, however, essentially recluses, withdrawn from public life except when they were called on to help in time of crisis, and they did not show any ostentation of wealth or position.

Dr. Kuper used the term 'specialist' to describe the diviners among the Swazi. In the Ngoni kingdoms there were many kinds of specialists owing to the existence of several tribal groups each with its traditional system of religion and magic, and each with varying methods of treating sickness, diagnosing the causes of misfortune, and interpreting omens and dreams. The diviners in the Ngoni kingdoms who were best known and on whom the greatest responsibility lay were those who were called by the Paramount in times of national crisis. Such responsibility and such fame had in pre-European days corresponding risks. The following story, which was told me in Hoho by Timoti Jere and which I heard quoted in several areas in the northern kingdom, puts in a traditional setting and with much circumstantial detail the kind of demands formerly made on diviners and the kind of treatment meted out to them:

¶ Zwangendaba in his coming out of South Africa arrived in the country of the Maculu at Mabiri. It is there now. When the *impi* was summoned it went out to contend for the country of the Sukuma. That *impi* wanted very much to be victorious, because it went to fight in two countries, in that of the Sukuma, where they took the long-horned cattle, and in that of the Ngonde, where they took the cattle without horns and with big humps. While the *impi* was away, the Paramount called all the *izinduna* and said 'Why has the *impi* delayed so long? Call the *izanusi* that they may divine. Perhaps the *impi* has run away and turned back.' Then the *izinduna* called the *izanusi*. In their divining they said 'The *impi* has run away and turned back.' There was one *izanusi*, his name was UMakhende Nkosi, who divined and said 'All the *impi* is there and it will return in this month. The long delay of the *impi* is because they have raided two countries, the country of the Sukuma with long-horned cattle and the country of the Ngonde with unhorned cattle.' It was so, and that month the *impi* returned and arrived at Mabiri with many herds of cattle as UMakhende Nkosi had said.

[1] Kuper, H. op. cit., p. 163.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

goods were handed over, the diviner thanked the giver in the customary manner, and his wife or child carried the gifts away. Informants said that leading Ngoni would never be mean in their payments to diviners, and that diviners of the upper grades would never bargain over their rewards. It was openly said that a leading diviner cared most for his reputation as a successful specialist, and that the kind of life he led and the sort of man he was did not induce a desire to be wealthy.

One aspect of the diviner's role among the Ngoni was that he, an individualist, was always summoned at the request of a group. In a case of sickness of one of its members, it was the family or the senior men of a house who summoned the diviner, and they gave him his reward and carried out his advice. When a family heard from the diviner that a sick member might recover if a sacrifice were made to their ancestors, they regarded the diviner, in Cibambo's phrase, as a go-between linking the living group and their dead ancestors. The diviner therefore, like the cattle, was an essential link in the relationship between the living and the dead.

CHAPTER IV

THE RITUAL OF ADDRESSING THE ANCESTRAL SPIRITS

In the course of the first three chapters of this section, and in earlier sections, many beliefs and practices have been discussed which bear on the ritual of the ancestor cult. In spite of the risk of some repetition it will be useful to bring together here in one chapter the main elements in the ritual, and in so doing to raise certain theoretical issues.

Dr. Kuper said[1] that among the Swazi, ancestor spirits were not worshipped, and she gave as the reasons for this statement that the spirits were addressed as living persons would be, being sometimes scolded and seldom thanked, and that indignation rather than humility was the attitude of the living when disasters befell them which might have been due to malice or carelessness on the part of the ancestors. Without entering into an argument on the nature of worship and its essential accompaniments, I would state that certain aspects of the Ngoni ancestor cult showed those features which are usually considered to be part of a people's worship. These were sacrifice, prayer, and purification, which, not necessarily in that order, were the main elements in the cult. There was, moreover, a connexion between the ancestor cult and ethical behaviour in Ngoni thinking. The guardianship of an ancestral spirit, involving much respect for the house to

[1] Kuper, H. op. cit., p. 192.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

child behaviour. Five of them appear to suggest values some of which have a place either in Nyakusa or Ngoni ideal personality patterns: self-reliance, obedience, responsibility, sociability, dominance. But there is at least one major difference between the approaches of Professor Wilson and Dr Whiting to the training of children. Professor Wilson is describing the values of Nyakusa adults and their effect on the bringing up of children. Dr Whiting has selected from a series of cultures certain typical or common forms of behaviour which might be displayed by children. These forms of behaviour might represent general social values, but they are not set in the context of any one culture, and the criterion is whether an observer saw a child displaying sociability rather than whether the society desired their children to show sociability and took steps to encourage it. This book was after all a manual to be usable in a number of cultural situations. His emphasis is nevertheless on the observed behaviour of selected children, and illustrates my point made in the early pages of this chapter; whereas Professor Wilson's emphasis was on the adult ideal personality to which, it was hoped, Nyakusa children would conform.

The existence of a 'system' in the upbringing of children, a system set up by a society and under its control, posed a number of questions. Clyde Kluckhohn in several of his books has for a long time provided me with clues in the study of 'systems', and many of these clues are summarized in the chapter on Personality and Culture in his book *Mirror for Man*. Especially in two directions these clues have proved helpful: in his distinction between two kinds of cultural learning, technical and regulatory, or acquiring skills and learning to behave, the latter taking place in the early years of chilhhood, and acquiring skills in later years; and in his theme of predictability, illustrated in this quotation: 'A definition of socialization in any culture is the predictability of an individual's daily behaviour in various defined situations. . . . When a person behaves most of the

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

surroundings were described in Chapter I, but in spite of some repetition I have given a fuller description here to set the stage for the earlier years of a young Ngoni child. In several respects a casual observer, looking at the external appearance of the hut and the objects round it, might fail to distinguish between them and almost any Nyasaland village. Many of the household objects were indeed the same as those used by other Nyasaland peoples. But there was more elaboration about Ngoni huts and compounds; they were as a rule kept in an orderly and clean condition; and there was cultural significance about some of the features of Ngoni households mentioned here and in Chapter I which was not found elsewhere.

To the small child taken to his grandmother's hut at weaning, the space within the fence of her compound was full of interest. There was the hut itself which might be the 'great hut' of the village or one of those known as the 'right hand' and 'left hand' huts. It was generally circular, with interior walls some seven to eight feet high, with a conical roof of tightly packed grass neatly trimmed at the edges and decorated with cows' horns from the peak downwards in four lines. Inside the hut framing the doorway were the two main door-posts, solid and polished with much handling. Four posts in the middle of the floor went up to the rafters and supported cross-bars and a light platform on which gourds, herbs and green vegetables were dried. Under this platform, in the centre of the hut, was the hollow place for the fire and the three rounded hearthstones on which pots were balanced when cooking took place there. Against the back wall of the hut was a slightly raised platform in which were several small hollows for the round bottomed pots holding water, or grain or beans. Surrounding the entire hut was a raised veranda some four to five feet wide, shaded by the projecting roof, and generally fenced in all round the back, thus making extra storage space. All round the front of the hut was a well-swept space, mudded and polished in

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

then meant running out of the compound to the freedom of the village. At that time young children might behave outrageously and be punished for it, but they were not held accountable. The nurse girls and the mother, or some other adult, was blamed for letting the child grow up with such an uncontrolled temper or appetite or tongue. Once children were recognized as having passed the young child stage, that is when they had their second teeth, they themselves were held accountable for their behaviour and punished more severely, even though parents were also blamed for careless upbringing. The social sanctions of rebuke and ridicule, which began to operate in the later years of young childhood to only a limited extent, were now seen in their full force, made use of by adults, and still more effectively by the children's own age-mates. The fear of estrangement, of social ostracism as the penalty for failing to conform to the required manners and ways of living, had increasing force as the children grew older. As little children they were buttressed and protected by adults in their childish quarrels with, and moods and attitudes towards, other children. As boys in the dormitory and as girls in the girls' circle they had no longer such protection, and the result was that they became increasingly sensitive to the opinion of their peers. Professor Wilson in her study of Nyakusa age-villages, has called this social awareness the quality known as 'being good company'—getting on well with their contemporaries.

It was at this stage, at the beginning of the children's newly-found independence, that the ear-piercing ceremony took place. In contrast with the neighbouring peoples, the Ngoni had no facial or body markings, and it was the pierced ears which showed they were true Ngoni. In the days of warfare, captives, especially boys and men, were forcibly made to have their ears pierced, and hence a number of men in the Ngoni kingdoms who were not of Ngoni clans were found with pierced ears. Sometimes their children went to their parents and said, 'We want to be made Ngoni now.'

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4
Cewa

The significance of Ngoni puberty ritual

We now come back to the question of why the Ngoni held to this private ritual for girls and boys at puberty. There were three main reasons. The first was that each Ngoni child belonged to his or her father's house. At this sign of physical maturity, significant for the boy or girl, and for the society, the elders of the house asserted anew their authority over them, performed a brief traditional ritual, and watched during the ritual for evidence of the Ngoni personality traits of courage and physical endurance which they expected to see in young adults. The second reason was that the change at puberty was regarded as marking only one of the stages in the development of growing boys and girls. It is true it had more significance for girls, in that it set the mature girls apart as a separate group. But it was not the prelude to immediate marriage, as the girls' initiation school was among the neighbouring Cewa people; nor was it in old days the prelude for the boys joining the army. The third reason was that the Ngoni did not regard fertility as the major dominant factor in the development of young women, as it undoubtedly was considered among the Cewa. They greatly disliked the ritual and the significance of the Cewa female initiation rites and forbade Ngoni women to have any part in them. Potency among men, on the other hand, was recognized as important both for the individual and for the social group, and impotence, particularly in leading men, was kept secret and hidden from outside knowledge as far as possible. If an Ngoni woman after marriage did not bear children, it was not considered a stigma on her, either individually or socially. The common practice of marrying one of her sisters as a 'substitute', or the very common practice of adoption was resorted to. The latter was always referred to as 'putting a child into the house of So and so'.

One of the alleged objects of initiation schools among other ethnic groups was to instruct the young initiates in correct

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

behaviour especially to elders, and to enforce by dramatic and sometimes brutal means a submissive attitude towards authority. That objective, as we have seen, was carried out by the Ngoni throughout their training of their children, from the earliest age upwards. They were half amused and half scandalized at the idea that young people had to be put in a camp in the bush in order to teach them how to behave.

Cultural changes in the assumption of adult roles

It is necessary to look back for a moment to the Ngoni past in order to see how changed external conditions in Nyasaland had altered the sequences and the timing of the process by which youths and young girls were recognized as adults. The stages of arriving at social maturity had been speeded up by cultural changes. In the days of warfare the senior herd-boys, from about twenty years of age, were called up at irregular intervals to form a new regiment. From this time they were known as 'young men' or 'youths', and they fought in the tribal wars for five years. In the off-season, during the rains when raids were not carried out, they were called to clear and cultivate the gardens of the Paramount and chiefs, and to help build houses and fence cattle kraals. At approximately the age of twenty-six to twenty-eight they were ordered to take the head-ring, the form of dressing the hair which formerly marked a married Ngoni man, and they were told they could marry and retire from the army. The older Ngoni declared that young men were not allowed to sleep with girls at all until they joined the army. Even then the relationship had to be initiated by the girl expressing her preference for a lover, and then sex relations were limited to partial intercourse. It was at marriage, after having been given the head-ring, that Ngoni youths were called 'men'. They moved out of the dormitory and built a hut for their wives in the area behind the huts belonging to their father's house. The cattle handed over on their marriage to the bride's family were taken from the herd belonging to that house.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

[P.1]

CHAPTER I

MARRIAGE IN THE TIME OF PEACE

1. *The old social structure*

IN THE DAYS before the European conquest, the Ngoni people lived in large villages each containing hundreds of huts built round a central cattle byre. Each married woman had her own hut and there were separate dormitories for boys and for girls. The huts were grouped into small clusters, each containing the dwellings of a few close agnates with their wives and children under the leadership of the senior male agnate. If the leader of the cluster was an important person, captives taken in war were allocated to him and their huts were included in his own cluster. Clusters were grouped into divisions, each usually under the control of a village lieutenant. Within the same division the heads of clusters were either agnates of the lieutenant or were people who had been captured by him or his father or who had been allocated to him by the chief and who were therefore bound to him as quasi-kinsmen. Several divisions made up a village under a headman or a regional governor. The village lieutenants were dependents or former captives of the headman or his ancestors, and were allocated to their divisions by him. Some divisions were under the control of junior kinsmen of the headman. Each village was attached to a royal headquarters where there was a senior queen. This arrangement of clusters, divisions, villages, and royal headquarters, which I refer to as the residential system, seems to have been similar to that found to-day among the Swazi.[1]

The system was a growing one. Brothers brought up in the same cluster gradually achieved their independence and split off to establish clusters of their own. The heads of clusters grew in importance and were promoted to village lieutenants so that their clusters became divisions, while divisions grew too large to be contained within the villages and moved off to establish themselves as separate villages. This process of expansion did not in itself affect the formal hierarchy of authority. The lieutenant who established his own village as a distinct spatial entity still remained a lieutenant of his lord, and deferred to him in matters of importance. The same word[2] was used to refer to a division of a royal headquarters, a division of a village, and a cluster within a division. The relationships of superordination and subordination between persons remained the same despite changes in spatial separation.

[1] Cf. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, p. 66.

[2] *Cigawo*, pl. *sigawo*, from *ku-gawa*, to divide.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

Succession to office within this system was from a man to his eldest son by his great wife. A man inherited from his father not only his father's dependents but also his father's political superiors. The segments of the system, although some of them had special names, could all be referred to by the name of the person in charge of each segment. The heir succeeded to the name of his father and to responsibility for the segment named after his father. New people came into the system in two ways: by birth and by capture. Captives were placed in the system by decree of the Paramount Chief and his regional governors. The function of marriage was, in this context, to locate children in the system unambiguously and uniquely.

Two systems of relationships set up ties which cut across the lines of the residential system. These were the military regimental system of age-sets and the bilateral kinship system. In this paper we shall be concerned only incidentally with the regimental system, in so far as it directly affected marriage. We are, however, concerned with the kinship system, and in particular with the relationship of husband and wife. By careful choice of wives for himself and his sons a man ensured that his own group of agnates was linked to many other agnatic groups by bonds of affinity and, in the next generation, of matrilateral kinship.

It is from this point of view that we can best approach the analysis of marriage as it was in 'the time of peace'. Marriage arrangements then worked in conjunction with the residential system which is now in decay and it is not surprising that the replacement of the old system by a new one has been accompanied by changes in the kinds of marriage entered into by Ngoni men and women.

2. *Fidelity and fertility*

The old Ngoni residential system had much in common with the Zulu and Swazi systems and there was much in common in the realm of marriage. Marriage involved a permanent transfer of the fertility of the woman to the man's group. The children of a man's wife fell entirely within his own segment of the system, so that political ties became coincident with lineage ties. But while marriage secured for a man legitimate descendents with whom to people his own segment, it also established ties of affection and obligation which cut across the cleavage lines of the residential system. A man and his affines were linked in a specific relationship, entailing definite rights in division in the marriage, validated by the transfer of cattle and made permanent by the birth of children. The rites of marriage affirmed the transfer of the woman's fertility, the agnatic affiliation of her children, and the rights and obligations of affines towards one another. This pattern is common to many peoples organized patrilineally. Nevertheless, some of the characteristics of highly developed agnatic systems, such as ghost marriage, the marriage of wives by a woman, and the marriage of a queen with cattle contributed by the whole nation, were not found among the Ngoni.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

contributed by the whole nation, were not found among the Ngoni.

Informants are agreed that in the old days young men and women married whom they were told and never attempted to make their own choice against their parents' will. From evidence available this seems to be an oversimplification. It seems likely that individual choice mattered less in those days than it does now, but it cannot have been entirely inoperative. It is said that each regiment of men used to flirt with its corresponding women's regiment, and that marriages sometimes followed. Wiese says that among the aristocratic families a woman had the right to choose her own husband, but that this right was dying out and it was becoming the practice to marry off daughters so as to secure the most marriage cattle and maintain upper-class endogamy.[3] It is true that on the evidence of genealogies there do not seem to have been many marriages between very aristocratic women and the most recently captured men, and that therefore we are justified in assuming a tendency towards upper-class endogamy, but this tendency seems not to have been very strong and indeed there never was a clear-cut upper class but instead a method of ranking families in terms of ethnic origin. My informants never suggested that a man would marry his daughter so as to bring in as many cattle as possible, and it seems unlikely that this was ever a common motive.[4]

A girl was expected to be chaste before she was married. From the procedure adopted by the Zulu and from information from other Ngoni groups, it seems likely that girls were examined at marriage to check that they had not been deflowered. Rattray records this among the Ngoni of Southern Nyasaland,[5] and Read makes a similar statement.[6] My own informants had such faith in the sexual rectitude of the past as contrasted with the promiscuity of the present that it was difficult to establish what they really thought happened. It seems that unmarried people were allowed intercourse *inter crura* and that this was considered not a violation of chastity. The whole question has been obscured by the conflict of values between the South-Eastern Bantu leaders, whose view appeared to have prevailed at the time, and the recent captives from the Cewa and kindred peoples, who believed that a girl would die if she did not copulate at puberty. We shall see the outcome of this conflict when we come to discuss modern marriage.

As might be anticipated in a system in which marriage is a transfer of fertility, a wife was expected to be fertile. If she was barren special procedures were adopted to validate the substance of the marriage. A man could appeal to his wife's relatives for another

[3] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expedição . . .', p. 473 and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 191.
[4] See below, p. 120.
[5] Rattray, *Some folk-lore stories and songs in Chinyanja, with English translation and notes*, S.P.C.K., 1907, p. 115.
[6] Margaret Read, 'The Moral code of the Ngoni and their former military state', *Africa*, xi (1938), p. 6.

The Chief did however interfere
643 to some extent in the marriages of those near him and on occasion took away a wife from one man and gave her as wife to another. Nsingu, the heir of Mpezeni I, once took a wife from one of the important men in his mother's royal village and made her his queen.
[769] The man committed suicide and Nsingu killed a beast to placate the anger of his mother's lieutenants. Such instances of intervention seem to have been rare and were disliked by the common people.

6. Polygyny

592 The pattern of growth of the residential system was determined by the grouping of children in the compound family. This grouping was in turn determined by the ranking of wives. It seems that the
595 South-Eastern Bantu system of dividing wives into three groups,
[171] a great house and a left- and a right-hand house was not continued. Old men are agreed that in the past wives could be described as either left-hand or right-hand, but there is no agreement on the principles of this division. In discussing the wives of well-known men who flourished about this period, there was no consensus about which women were left-hand wives and which were right. The division cannot in any case have had the same spatial reference to the husband's cattle byre as among the South-Eastern Bantu,
[361] since the Ngoni lived in large villages with a central byre containing all the cattle of the village.

595 Wives were arranged into small groups which we may term
592 'bands'. A band might contain up to a dozen co-wives and was under the charge of its senior member. Wives in a band lived close to each other in the same cluster of huts. A man might have as many as five or six bands of wives, and the senior wife of one of the bands was the man's great wife, the mother of his heir. We have seen that a cross-cousin was inferior to an unrelated wife, and a wife from the same or related village inferior to one from afar. These two considerations, however, seem only to have influenced a man's choice of senior wives and did not themselves directly determine wifely rank. Thus a man could if he wished make a cross-cousin from his own village his great wife or the senior wife of one of his bands, but most men did not do so. The first wife married with bridewealth was the great wife. If there was a wife married earlier for whom no bridewealth had been paid, perhaps a cross-cousin or a recently captured woman, then she became subordinate to the chief wife and was regarded as a member of her band. Wives married subsequently were attached to this band until the husband decided to start another band. He took either one of the wives of his great wife's band or else a newly acquired wife, and established a new cluster of huts for her. Some other members of the great wife's band might be transferred to the new band, as subordinates of the newly promoted wife. As the man continued to take new wives they were allocated to one or other of the existing bands. If the husband was an important man he allocated to each

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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her pro-husband. If there was no younger brother the pro-husband was one of her husband's junior patrilineal kinsmen of his own generation. She could not refuse a pro-husband although her husband's brothers could choose not to provide her with a pro-husband if they so wished. The widow continued to live in her own cluster where her pro-husband came to visit her. Rattray states that widows waited one year after their husband's death before their re-marriage was settled[23] and this is nowadays the traditional procedure. Wiese, however, writes that widows waited four years before they could marry again.[24] The children begotten by the pro-husband were regarded as children of the dead man for social purposes but the identity of their genitor was not disguised. They called him *father*, but this was as much because he was their dead pater's brother and their mother's pro-husband as because he was their genitor.

The same principle of substitution was applied to betrothal. If a man died before marrying a girl to whom he was betrothed, the betrothal passed to a younger brother or a classificatory brother. If a girl died before marrying the man to whom she was betrothed, the betrothal passed to a younger sister. Unlike the operation of the levirate, however, the children of this type of marriage were regarded as the children of their genitor and genetrix for all purposes, as though their parents had been betrothed to each other in the first place. Again, unlike the levirate, if a man considered himself too old when his betrothed became marriageable he might give her instead to his son as a wife. The children of this marriage were also regarded for all purposes as the children of their genitor and genetrix.

Occasionally a woman whose husband died young, went to live with a man who was not her dead husband's brother, real or classificatory. The pro-husband gave a goat to the woman, but if bride-wealth had been offered for her by her first husband, the pro-husband could never gain permanent custody of the children. The children that she bore by him belonged to the segment of the dead man, took his descent name, and when old enough went to live in his segment. When the dead man's kinsmen claimed these children, they gave a beast to their genitor 'to straighten his back', that is, for his labour in begetting them. This arrangement is in some ways analagous to Nuer widow-concubinage[25] but with the important difference that the pro-husband, although not a kinsman of the dead man, had rights in the widow as a wife and an exclusive right to her sexual services. It seems that the status of a widow living in this kind of union was not low. In one instance I heard of, very aristocratic families were involved, and the arrangement appears to have been

[23] Rattray, op. cit., p. 97.
[24] Wiese, op. cit. 'Expedição . . .', p. 474, and 'Geschichte . . .', p. 192.
[25] Cf. Evans-Pritchard, *Some Aspects of Marriage and Family Among the Nuer* (Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. Eleven), p. 18.

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The precise significance of these ratios need not concern us here. It is sufficient to note that they indicate that divorce among the Ngoni is more frequent than it is among the Nguni people from whom they first came where divorce is said to be 'rare'.[36] The Ngoni ratios are closer to the Lamba and Bemba than to the Tswana.[37] The indication is that Ngoni informants are right when they assert that divorce is much more frequent than it used to be, for it seems legitimate to suppose that in former times the Ngoni were more like their Nguni forbears, in this as in other things, than they are now.

Once agreed upon, either at the court or in the village, divorce

Table IX. Marital experience of males, by age, 1948-9

Present age in years	Marital experience													
	All males								Wedded males only					
	Number of marriages entered into since birth								Number of divorces experienced since birth					
	0	1	2	3	4	5	Not known	Total	0	1	2	3	Not known	Total
0–4	51	–	–	–	–	–	–	51	–	–	–	–	–	0
5–9	61	–	–	–	–	–	–	61	–	–	–	–	–	0
10–14	55	–	–	–	–	–	–	55	–	–	–	–	–	0
15–19	28	3	–	–	–	–	–	31	2	1	–	–	–	3
20–24	14	5	–	–	–	–	1	20	5	–	–	–	1	6
25–29	–	12	3	–	–	–	1	16	11	4	–	–	1	16
30–34	–	6	2	–	–	–	–	8	4	4	–	–	–	8
35–39	–	8	6	1	2	–	–	17	10	6	1	–	–	17
40–44	–	3	1	2	1	1	–	8	4	3	1	–	–	8
45–49	–	4	3	–	1	–	1	9	5	2	1	–	1	9
50–54	–	3	2	–	–	–	1	6	4	1	–	–	1	6
55–59	–	5	1	2	–	1	1	10	5	3	–	1	1	10
60–64	–	3	3	3	1	1	–	11	7	2	–	2	–	11
65–69	–	1	5	1	3	–	–	10	4	6	–	–	–	10
70–74	–	–	1	1	1	–	–	3	1	1	1	–	–	3
75–79	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	2	1	1	–	–	–	2
Not known	–	–	–	–	–	–	7	7	–	–	–	–	7	7
Total	209	53	28	11	9	3	12	325	63	34	4	3	12	116

[36] Gluckman, 'Kinship and marriage among the Lozi of Northern Rhodesia and the Zulu of Natal', in Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, eds., *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, p. 204.

[37] Gluckman in Mitchell and Barnes, 'The Lamba Village: report of a social survey' (*Communications from the School of African Studies*, University of Cape Town, new series No. 24), pp. 15 ff., and Richards, op. cit. p. 120.

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584 or friends. If the man is away working or in the Army he may make his proposal by letter. When agreement has been reached negotiations can proceed although they are carried on as if there had been no prior agreement and the proposal was entirely a new one.

A man tells his eldest brother of his intention to marry, or, if he is the eldest son, he may approach his father direct. He does not [593] speak to his mother about this matter, for a man does not confide in his mother about anything connected with sex, but she is told of his intention by her husband. A man ought to tell his grand- [603] mother at an early stage, particularly the grandmother who reared him. A woman tells her sisters and her grandmother, and her eldest sister will tell her eldest brother. The man's father or eldest brother may decide on who shall act as intermediaries in the matchmaking, or else the man may himself ask important people in the village to act. There is no definite rule as to who they should be, and either men or women or both may make up the party. Usually two or three people go, and a man will try and choose people who are reliable and sober and tactful. Marriage intermediaries do not have the same important responsibilities for the marriage as do the marriage ●[191] sureties (or witnesses) among the Nyanja and Yao although they are known by the same term.[3] The intermediaries go to the woman's village and consult her senior relatives. Traditionally they should go to the woman's grandmother, either her father's mother or her mother's mother, depending on who lives in the village and who is the more important. They tell her that they have heard that such-and-such a marriage has been contemplated. The girl's grandmother tells the girl's father that the intermediaries have come, and if nothing has arisen to jeopardize the marriage, the visiting party are told that all is well and that they must come back again. They return to their own village, and the next day, or the next week if it is a long way to walk, they go again, bringing with them a gift or some- [583] times the legalization payment. The gift or money is handed to the person leading the negotiations on the woman's side who passes it on to the woman's father. Arrangements are made about the gall bladder ceremony and a date fixed. The intermediaries then go back to their village.

585 At the gall bladder ceremony the bride receives formal advice [591] from her affines and the people in their village. Shortly afterwards she begins to live with her husband in either his or her village. If they live virilocally she does not at first cook for her husband, but the couple rely on food prepared by his other wives or his mother or [593] grandmother. It may be up to a year later that the woman first cooks for her husband and husband's father, the latter commenting on her cooking. When she first becomes pregnant she is anointed 843 by her husband's grandmother, and goes with a young girl from her husband's kinsfolk to announce her pregnancy to her own kin.

[3] *Nkhoswe.*

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and have the money to spare, they may buy her clothes. The only ways in which she can raise money easily for herself are by brewing beer, making pots, and working on the farms. To work on a farm she must, however, remove herself from the surveillance of her husband's kin, and unless she goes to join a contingent from their village working at the farm, they may think she is running away from them to seek a lover or new husband. We have seen, however, from Table XIV that significantly more wives whose husbands are away live uxorilocally.

Many husbands write home, not only to their wives, and some remit postal orders and bank-notes. A man may get a friend who is returning from Southern Rhodesia to take home blankets and other bulky articles to be handed over to his wife. He may send presents like these direct to his wife or he may think it more prudent to send them to his father or brother and allow them to hand on to his wife as much as they think fit. The woman must then behave herself in the eyes of her affines if she wishes to receive her husband's presents. The acceptance of these gifts is taken as proof that the woman is still dependent on her husband however long he stays away. If the woman applies to the court for a divorce on the ground of desertion, the presents will be cited by her husband's kinsfolk as evidence that there is no intention on his part to desert. Gluckman reports from the Lozi that even if a man sends goods, after a statutory period the court will hold that 'a woman marries a man and not a blanket', that is, the husband must return to look after and sleep with his wife as well as send clothes to her. This argument is not used among the Ngoni. A woman who complains that she is not satisfied with marriage under these conditions is told to write to her absent husband and ask him for the fare to join him in Southern Rhodesia.

Case history 10

Saul was working in Nyasaland. He sent home to his wife 7*s*. 6*d*. for clothes. Later she wrote to him saying she wanted him to return. He sent her 15*s*., being 5*s*. for clothes and 10*s*. bus fare so that she could join him. She did not go and later went to the court complaining she had been deserted. Her husband's relatives argued, to the satisfaction of the court, that as her husband had sent her these gifts he was still taking care of her. The court dismissed her plea as she had refused to go to Nyasaland when the fare had been sent.

The husband's relatives try to watch carefully the movements of the woman so that they may prevent or at least report any adultery on her part. If they are in touch with the husband, they write to him should they suspect infidelity. Sometimes the husband ignores their letter, sometimes he gives them instructions how they should proceed in the matter, and sometimes he returns to the village to see for himself what is going on. He arrives without warning and hopes to catch his wife in the act. If all is well and he is satisfied that his wife has been faithful he usually goes back to work again.

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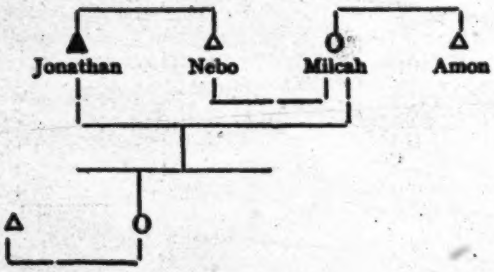
Case history 12



Nebo inherited the wife, Milcah, of his elder brother Jonathan. Neither brother paid bridewealth. One of the daughters of Jonathan and Milcah was married and the legalization payment for her taken by Nebo. In 1947 Nebo brought his wife to court to divorce her. He said that she was always committing adultery and he was afraid that one day he would kill her in anger. Milcah's brother Amon complained that Nebo had taken the legalization payment of Jonathan's daughter, and insisted that if there was a divorce custody of all Milcah's children should be given to him. This was accepted by the court, who told Nebo that if he wanted the children he must pay bridewealth. The divorce was granted and £3 damages awarded to Milcah. The payment of bridewealth was left undecided.

in marriage, and some people are beginning to confuse the rights originally transferred by it with the rights *in genetricem* associated with bridewealth. The vernacular term for the legalization payment (*cimalo*) is common to many tribes in the Eastern Province, whereas that for bridewealth (*malowolo*) is peculiar to the Ngoni. Bridewealth is not recorded on the marriage certificate whereas the legalization payment is. It is possible that while the rights *in genetricem* relating to the residence of the children of the marriage will remain indefinite and unenforcable, rights *in genetricem* relating to the acceptance of legalization payments for the daughters of the marriage will become attached to the legalization payment itself. This trend is illustrated by the following incident.

Case history 13

Simon had been married for many years and his daughter was being sought in marriage. Simon's wife's brother Nimshi came to see him to remind him that he had not yet handed over either the legalization payment or bridewealth for his wife. Simon admitted this. Nimshi said that someone would soon be offering a legalization payment for Simon's daughter. If Simon wanted to keep the money he must first offer the legalization payment in his own marriage. Simon paid Nimshi and kept the payment for his daughter.

Here Nimshi held that the legalization payment offered by Simon entitled Simon to keep the legalization payment offered for his daughter. According to traditional usage Nimshi should have insisted that Simon paid bridewealth not merely the legalization

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if the latter is unable to leave the area legally.[39] Various devices have been introduced to prevent women from using other people's passes, such as recording finger-prints on the certificate. On the other hand there are a great variety of ways in which women contrive to leave the area without a proper pass, such as marrying the bus driver for the duration of the journey, getting off the bus and walking round the control points, and so on.

13. The Administration and the missions

Under the Laws of Northern Rhodesia, which guide the Administration, the only valid marriages between Africans are those performed in accordance with 'customary tribal law'. There has never been any systematic attempt to codify the rules implied by this phrase, and in any particular case that comes before the Administration's courts, the views of individual African assessors must carry weight. The tendency has been to try and discover what used to happen in the old days rather than what was the *de facto* law at the time. On the other hand, there appears to have been a feeling that women were entitled to certain rights in equity that may perhaps have been associated with the proviso that 'customary tribal law' shall not be administered when it is 'repugnant to natural justice and morality'. The Administration has certainly been sympathetic towards deserted wives seeking divorce and has encouraged Native Courts to allow their pleas where the husband has been many years away and has not written home. In the past the District Officer on tour has divorced batches of women who had applied in vain to the Native Courts for divorce on the ground of desertion. It has been argued by the Administration that since chiefs depend on the gifts of returned labour migrants to supplement their own income, they are reluctant to offend men by divorcing their wives in their absence. There are fewer divorces, in relation to the same number of pleas, granted in Ngoni courts than among the neighbouring Cewa, who are subject to the same Administrative and mission influences. The Ngoni find no consolation in this comparison. They merely observe that there are more divorces now than there used to be, and blame the Whites for the change.

The missions are all concerned with the development of Christian marriage, but their ideas as to what this is differ from one denomination to another, as do their views on the relationship of Christian to other types of marriage. The White Fathers and the Universities Mission to Central Africa do not allow divorce, while the Dutch Reformed Church Mission does. The U.M.C.A. insist that all 'customary obligations' shall be fulfilled before a marriage can be solemnized between Christians, the White Fathers

[39] Cf. Barnes, op. cit. pp. 245f for the rules regulating the movement of women beyond Fort Jameson District.

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to the kin of the married couple however much the kin may intervene in the marriage and act on behalf of the couple.

The belief in the occurrence of such diseases as *mdulo* and *lugola* supports the values of Ngoni society, and acts as a check on behaviour which is wrong in Ngoni eyes. Beliefs in the efficacy of medicines do not have such a straightforward moral connotation, for in theory it is as easy for a man to harm the wife of someone else by the use of medicines, or for a woman to harm her co-wife, as it is for a man to harm his cuckold. Medicines can, therefore, be used for good or ill, depending on the intentions of those who manipulate them. Even the possibility of anti-social manipulation of medicines can, however, have a positive effect, as we have seen in the way in which a wife is encouraged to live demurely without attracting the attention of other men, lest when she spurns their advances they retaliate with medicines to harm her in childbirth. Old people like to maintain that in 'the time of peace' the Ngoni did not use medicines at all, although from what we know of the Zulu and other South-Eastern Bantu tribes from which the Ngoni came, this is almost certainly untrue. 'Our spears were our medicines', they say, meaning that when the state was powerful both internally and in relation to their neighbours, law and order and the wishes of the Paramount Chief could be enforced by physical sanctions. Only now, when the chieftainship has lost so much of its former power and men and women can do wrong without fear of punishment in the courts, is it necessary to fall back on mystical processes in an attempt to control other people's behaviour. By contrast the mystical diseases which can only be caught through socially disapproved actions operated at both stages of Ngoni history, although *mdulo* itself, unlike *lugola* and other similar conditions, appears to have been introduced by the Cewa.[8]

To a lesser extent the fear of venereal disease may be said to act as a stabilizing factor, since men admit that they are cautious in running after women on farms, in Fort Jameson and away in the big towns, because they fear syphilis. In the village an infected woman, if she cannot conceal her condition, is shunned by careful men, and a newcomer to the village who starts to flirt with her may be taken aside by an older man and warned of the risk of infection. It is an actionable offence for one partner in a marriage to transmit venereal disease to the other. Venereal disease is, however, commonly believed to be widespread and the fear of it cannot be said to be an efficient deterrent of adultery.

Despite the mystical safeguards and despite the fairly well defined rights *in uxorem*, marriage is not regarded as a permanent bond. There is a maxim 'Never confide in your wife, for tomorrow you may divorce her.' Consanguinity is permanent and unchangeable and a man should confide in a brother rather than in his wife. The

[8] Cf. Read, op. cit. 'The moral code . . .', p. 7.

rights at all. The payment of bridewealth had in the past enabled affinally related groups of kin to 'foresee the behaviour of one another in given situations since the payments evoke the behaviour'[10] but now the given situations were unlikely to occur. We may say then in this second phase poverty and uncertainty about the overall system of social relationships within which marriages would continue caused marriage payments to be low and, in some instances, non-existent.

The gradual increase in power of the Native Authority and the contemporaneous increased participation in the money economy have brought about further changes in the third phase, beginning round about 1930. In recent years the value of the legalization payment has increased and seems likely to increase further. This change is demonstrated in Table VII, although we must recall that the time classification in this table is by year of marriage, not year of payment. Similar increases have been noted among other Eastern Province tribes, notwithstanding cultural differences between them and the Ngoni. This increase has been possible because of the rise in wages and prices, but we cannot regard this as the sole cause. This simple hypothesis is ruled out by the simultaneous fall in bridewealth, as suggested by Table VI. While wages have risen, the rights associated with bridewealth have declined in importance and those associated with the legalization payment have remained significant. A high payment gives each particular marriage the mark of stability, yet at the same time the process which enables a young man to offer as much as £10 for his bride without appealing to his kinsmen for help has also made his expectation of life-long marriage with her less than it would have been thirty years ago, when he would have offered only 6s. Men earn money in Southern Rhodesia and the Copperbelt. They move freely between urban and rural environments, using the money to make large marriage payments in the villages. They stand on their own, do not call on their senior agnates for help, marry where they will, and settle with that headman whose village most attracts them or is most conveniently situated for siting a new shop. Yet if in this way they can free themselves from prescribed affiliation to a kin group, so can their children do the same. The former structural basis for stable marriage, the invariable affiliation of children to their agnatic group, has gone. There is as yet no system of law and morals, nor sufficient interest in inheritable property, to provide an alternative means of stablizing marriage. As among the Ila, high marriage payments accompany frequent divorce.

The hypothesis that increased frequency of divorce among the Ngoni is due mainly to the breakdown of their agnatic system may be supported by comparison with the Zulu and other Natal tribes. Here the old system, characterized by strong agnatic affiliation and

[10] *ibid*, p. 172.

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rare divorce, has survived despite loss of sovereignty, territorial dispersal, economic impoverishment, high incidence of labour migration, and frequent adultery and illegitimacy.[11] The Ngoni, subjected to similar external processes, but in addition surrounded by matrilineal peoples and themselves largely of matrilineal origin, have lost their agnatic affiliation and, with it, stable marriage.

It is difficult to see exactly where this trend will lead. The third phase, as I have characterized it, is a recent development. There does not seem to have been any sharp rise in marriage payments until the 1939-45 war. During the war many Ngoni men earned higher wages than ever before in the Army and in industry. It may have been this that was decisive in raising the level of payments. It will be remembered that the thirty shillings minimum for the legalization payment was fixed by law during the war. It may, however, be suggested that if it is hoped by raising the level of payments to achieve stability in marriage, this hope is in vain. Payments may rise if people are in a position to pay more. Higher wages permit higher marriage payments without necessitating further changes in economic life, but in fact these changes are already taking place. Money is needed for more clothes, more food, more education, as well as for higher marriage payments. Payments rise as Africans participate increasingly in the general money economy of Southern Africa. The more they participate, the less marriage is constrained by a kinship structure based on morally significant face-to-face relations between agnates. The higher payments rise the more frequent becomes divorce. This is not a long-term prognosis, for I have indicated above that affiliation is not the only possible determining factor, and it is clear that if more people align themselves with those missions which do not permit divorce, the frequency of divorce as a whole may decline. There are other possibilities, but it seems to me unlikely that any of these other social mechanisms will become effective quickly; therefore the most probable concomitant of a rise in marriage payments in the immediate future is more frequent divorce.

Thus we see that at least for the Ngoni, changes in the amount and distribution of property have had a marked effect on the level of marriage payments, and that this effect can to some extent be isolated from that due to changes in kinship structure and in divorce frequency.

10. Attempts to resist change

The major structural changes taking place in Ngoni society in the last fifty years have not come about entirely unopposed. The Administration, the missions, and the Ngoni people themselves have noticed from year to year how the old order was changing and with varying success have made attempts to control the direction of change.

[11] Cf. information from Kark cited by Gluckman, op. cit., p. 204, footnote 1

7: Hodgson G-5 (1926) 1933 FR5 Ngoni FR5 Maravi FR4

Livingstone found chief Mwase, at Kasungu, ruling over "a section of Mang'anja, called Machewa, or Macheba[1]."

For some years the Achewa enjoyed a peaceful existence in their new home, keeping cattle, but living mainly by agriculture, until their tranquility was disturbed by the Ngoni invasion and by the slave raids of the Jumbe[2] at Kota Kota. By these the eastern branch of Achewa was continually harassed; and consequently in 1893 Dzoole, Kanyenda and others of the house of Karonga moved south to the Kasangadzi and Mtiti Rivers, and in 1896 handed over this part of the country to the protection of the British Government.

The Angoni, under the name of Mazitu, were described by Livingstone as Zulus,[3] and this terminological error has been copied by more than one subsequent writer. Of their earlier wanderings no record has been traced. Owing, perhaps, to their lighter colour it has been surmised that they came from far up the east coast; but it is known that under the style of Abe-nguni, derived from an ancient chief Mnguni, they were settled on the Dedesi, a small tributary of the upper St. John's River, when the Aba-mbo first arrived in Natal about 1620.[4] In this locality they remained for a couple of centuries, till towards the end of his reign the notorious Zulu king Chaka fell upon their allies the Ama-ndwandwe under Zwide. A section of the Abe-nguni then migrated northwards under Zwangendaba; and wherever they went they fought and subdued the peoples through whose country they passed, seizing cattle and incorporating captives in their own tribe. After raiding the Aba-suto, Ama-swazi, Aba-thonga[5] and Ama-kalanga, they crossed the Zambezi near Zumbo at the time of the total eclipse of the sun on the 19th of November, 1835,[6] and overran the territories of the Aba-senga, A-tumbuka, A-safwa and A-mandewere till they came to the land of the Wa-fipa and Wa-sukuma.

Here Zwangendaba (or Songandawa, as he is generally called in Nyasaland) died, and his following broke up and scattered in different directions. While others advanced to the north and east, four sections turned back, one under Mombera to the Tumbuka country, another under Mpezeni to the Loangwa river, the third under Chiwere to Dowa, and the fourth under Chikusi still further south. It is with the third section that we are now dealing. The hybrid nature of the Dowa Angoni can be inferred from the list of clans given in a subsequent section (IV, 2). During the last four decades they have intermarried still further with the Achewa, and there are now few, if any, pure-blooded Angoni in the district. Their paramount chief, Chiwere, though calling himself an Mngoni, is in reality an Maenga.

The general features, characteristics and habits of these peoples are akin to those of neighbouring tribes which have been described by the Reverend Duff Macdonald,[7] Miss Alice Werner

[1] D. and C. Livingstone: *loc. cit.*, pp. 526, 548.

[2] A coast Arab, acting as *wali*, or representative, of the Sultan of Zanzibar.

[3] D. and C. Livingstone: *loc. cit.*, p. 381.

[4] Eric A. Walker: *Historical Atlas of South Africa*, p. 6. J. H. Soga: *The South-Eastern Bantu*, pp. 81, *et seq.*

[5] In ph and th each consonant is pronounced. Similarly, in ee and oo each vowel is pronounced.

[6] E. H. L. Poole: *Journal African Society*, vol. xxix, No. cxv, p. 290.

[7] Rev. Duff Macdonald, *Africana*. Miss Alice Werner, *The Natives of British Central Africa*. Dr. H. S. Stannus, *The Wayao of Nyasaland*, Harvard African Studies III, *Varia Africana* III, pp. 229-372, "Notes on Some Tribes of British Central Africa," *Journ. Roy. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. xl, 1910, pp. 285-385, etc., etc.

7: Hodgson . G-5 (1926) 1933 FR5 Ngoni FR5 Maravi FR4

Dr. H. S. Stannus and other writers, and I have attempted, therefore, in the following pages to confine myself to matters which, so far as I know, have not been recorded fully elsewhere. The present tense is generally used, though in many instances, during forty years of contact with missionary and other European influence, the custom described may have fallen wholly or partially into desuetude. Except where otherwise stated, the notes may be taken as referring to the Chewa tribe.

II. Domestic Life: Marital.

1. *Mdulo.* (*Chewa*).

Mdulo (a noun derived from *ku-dula*, to cut or break off) is the causing of illness in oneself or another person by indulging in sexual intercourse at prohibited times, or, more rarely, by abstaining therefrom when it is prescribed. The following are examples of cases in which the misfortune of *mdulo* is conferred:

(*a*) Upon a husband by his wife if he eats food into which she has put salt either during her periods or after she has committed adultery.

(*b*) Upon an unweaned child by its father—

(1) if he fails to achieve connexion after its birth (*vide infra* II, 7);

(2) if he commits adultery in his own house when the child is there;

(3) if he has connexion with his wife on the child's blanket when the child is sleeping in the house; or

(4) if he occupies the same house with two wives, and has connexion with the other in the temporary absence of the child and its mother.

(*c*) Upon an unweaned child by its mother if she leaves its *sibereko*[1] outside the house while she has intercourse and afterwards puts the child into it again. In the event of such a contretemps the *sibereko* must always be given away to someone else.

(*d*) Upon the womb of a wife by her husband—

(1) if he commits adultery when she is pregnant and then eats with her out of the same pot.

(2) When a man has two wives, he normally spends a week or two with each in turn. If, when one is pregnant, he leaves her for an abnormally long period, he must not return to her until after she has given birth, otherwise he will thereby "cut off" the womb. The result of this misadventure is that the wife will die in child-birth, or the child will be still-born or will die shortly after birth.

(*e*) Upon a boy in the *bwalo*[2] by his parents—

(1) when the boy comes to their house in their absence and helps himself to meat or food from a pot, if the parents have intercourse on their return and then give him meat from the same piece or food from the pot;

[1] *Sibereko*, the cloth or skin fastened round a mother's neck or shoulder and slung on her back, in which she carries her child till it is weaned, that is, till it has reached the age of two or three years. The *sibereko*, when made of tanned skin is often decorated gaily with beads. *Ku-beka* is the verb meaning to carry in this way.

[2] *Bwalo*, the communal open space in a village. Boys of five or six years of age, who are too old to continue to sleep with their parents, go to a communal hut until they are married. This hut is known as the "*bwalo*" hut, and the boys are said to be "in the *bwalo*."

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

132 84° F. and the mean minimum 61·5° F.[1] Three seasons are distinguished: the wet season, from the beginning of November until about April; the cold season, from May until July; and the hot season, from August until the rains begin again. Most of the planting takes [241] place in the first half of the wet season, and the harvest comes after the rains have ceased. There is very little fishing, but antelopes, leopards, 224 wild pig, and buck are hunted for their meat, and lions, leopards, 136 hyenas, and monkeys on account of the damage they do to crops and livestock. The greater part of the region is free enough from tsetse fly to permit cattle-keeping, and for the tribe as a whole there is approxi- [231] mately one head of cattle to every two people. Pigs, sheep, goats, and chickens are also kept.

171 The material culture of the tribe is similar to that of their neigh- 342 bours. They live in one- or two-roomed huts of bamboo or pole and 323 mud; some women make pottery and some men make reed mats; 285 all buy their clothes and their hoes from the shops.[2]

Three languages are used in the region: Ci-Ngoni, a language akin to 197 Zulu, is now heard only in songs and royal praises; Ci-Nyanja is taught in the schools and is used for communication with Europeans and Indians; while the normal language used every day in the villages is a dialect of Ci-Nsenga.

I. THE STATE

Old Administrative System

186 The Ngoni think of themselves as different from their neighbours 619 because of their chieftainship. The other tribes do not, in the eyes 642 of the Ngoni, possess the same kind of pyramidal and centralized organization which was characteristic of the régime of Mpezeni I and which persists in a modified form at the present time.

619 The important positions in the old political structure were occupied 631 by members of the royal lineage, their queens, the regional governors,[3] 554 and the lieutenants.[4] The political system was at the same time the territorial system, residence being determined by political allegiance. The pattern of residence and allegiance persisted despite the movement of the tribe as a whole from one region to another and despite

[1] Trapnell, *Ecological Survey*, pp. 2-3.
[2] See my *Material Culture of the Fort Jameson Ngoni*.
[3] *Malumunana*, pl. *alumunana*.
[4] *Nduna*, pl. *nduna*.

Il:Lancaster G-5 (ca. 1935) 1937 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4

migration about 1833; her burial place is unknown. She died without issue. She was the eldest daughter of Nombhengula, who was a brother of Ziwide and Sigode, and a son of Langa Vimba Nqumayo. She was a cousin to Manukusa, son of Sigode, and to Nompetu, daughter of Ziwide, who married Matshobana, the father of Mzilikazi. Sometimes it happens that a great wife or other major wife is not blessed with children. In these cases another woman is placed in her "house" with the object of raising seed to it. The children resulting are looked upon as children of the establishment in which their mother was "placed" and are in the same position as if born to the major wife; the eldest son of a chief's "Great Wife" inherits the chieftainship of the tribe on the death of his father. This was, and is, the custom of the Ngoni; it is also known to the Achewa and Ansenga Tribes. This custom is known to the Ngoni as *Nshlanze*.

Zongendaba therefore took as *Nshlanze* Sosera Nqumayo, a younger sister of Loziwawa, and by her he had issue as follows:—Ntutu Mpezeni, the eldest son, "the Inkosana of the Indhlunkulu," Jadose, Mtwalalichi, and Ndhlobvu Makekevu. Sosera was born about 1808 near St. Lucia Bay. She migrated with the chief and followed him through all his wanderings until his death, after which she accompanied her son and heir, Ntutu Mpezeni, into what is now the Fort Jameson district. There she settled in her village called "Dingeni," where she died in 1900 and was buried near the site of the old village of Mtenguleni Uka Sosera close to the Kakolo stream; her grave is now marked by an euphorbia tree. The site is on the farm owned by Major Jefferies, O.B.E., which prior to the invasion of the Ngoni used to be the land of the Achewa chief, Kampara.

Sosera is well remembered by many natives who are living to-day, and although she died at a great age it is said that she was in possession of her full faculties until the last. She is described as being a real chieftainess and it is said that in later years if annoyed by the younger generation she would lay about her with her *nchiza* (staff) in a lusty manner. Many amusing tales are told of her astuteness and dry humour.

After Zongendaba's death, Sosera chose for a very beautiful woman, named Nthonane, who was a young sister-wife to the house and who had borne no children, one, Sawasa Mazunko, as a seed raiser, for which he received twenty head of cattle. A daughter was born and named Ndawiri Jere; she now resides in the Fort Manning District of Nyasaland and from her this information was obtained. Ndawiri looked upon Ntutu Mpezeni as her brother, and Ndawiri was, and is, looked upon as one of Zongendaba's children. She married Ndawombi, since dead, and has one son, Ndawombi Hara.

It is agreed by the old indunas that Ntutu Mpezeni would have been about nine years of age when he crossed over the Zambesi, that he was carried across as befitted a Paramount Chief's heir, that, prior to the crossing, Zongendaba had given him a little shield and an assegai, and that he had killed his first duiker buck before the crossing. This is also borne out by the sons of Zimakazi Lavu Ngoma and Ngandu Mbawa, both of whose fathers were set the task of being servants to the chief's heir in his youth.

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890)1901
FR5 Ngoni FR5

when the death penalty can hardly be exacted, or compensation made in the delivery over of slaves, they find it hard to satisfy demands and make a show of justice.

Now let us speak of the social life of the people. The Ngoni differ from most of the Central Africa tribes in their habit of living in large unprotected villages. The tendency of most of the other tribes is to scatter themselves in very little hamlets over a wide area, with scarcely a path of communication between the villages. Where war has harassed them they have built huge stockaded villages for their mutual protection, but as soon as assured peace has come again, the towns have split into numerous distant groups of houses. This seems to be caused by the dread and mistrust of one another which the people have through their superstitious belief in a evil eye, and in witchcraft, and through the perpetual little quarrels that arise. A carrier who was accompanying a friend of mine described this state very well when they passed a little village of four huts, and then a few hundred yards farther on an isolated hut. Holding up his hand he cried, "Look at Mr. Thumb saying to Messrs. Fourfingers, keep your distance."

The heart of a Ngoni village is the large circular cattle kraal. There all the court cases are tried, there the visitors are received, and there the dances are held. Round the kraal the village of beehive huts is built in regular rows, and then immediately outside the gardens begin. The village life takes the place of family life, and the headman is father of all the people. The boys after they have attained to twelve years of age or so live in huts by themselves, and the girls in huts on the opposite side of the village. These girls' quarters used to be most sacredly guarded, and any man found in their enclosure after dark could be killed.

The great part of the Ngoni nation consists of domestic slaves. They are people, or the descendants of people, who have been captured in raiding expeditions. But their position is not a hard one. If they are discontented they may change masters. They give their masters a little free labour, and in return are made members of his family; he espouses all their quarrels, looks after them in sickness, and shares some of his superfluity with them, but they have to share some of their necessities with him.

Polygamy was the universal custom of the people until recently. Now hundreds of polygamous unions are being dissolved every year. But in the rougher days polygamy was a necessary

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890) 1901·
FR5 Ngoni FR5

condition. It helped to maintain the comparatively high morality of the people. And it was never allowed to go to the extremes that the Tonga or others went to when a single chief would have 100 wives. The expensiveness of marriage put a limit on a man's matrimonial ambitions. Yet polygamy was essentially an evil custom. It was based on sensuality and on indolence. And when Christianity comes bringing industry, and self-restraint, it must disappear.

In the old days the chiefs would not allow the men to marry till they were over thirty, and the women were strong and full grown. This preserved the splendid physique of the tribe. But now the laxer customs of the Central Africans is telling on the Ngoni, and one of our hardest tasks is to absolutely refuse marriage to couples whom we think to be too young for this serious responsibility. I have a marriage service every Tuesday, at which I usually unite eight or ten couples in holy wedlock. But these have first of all to come to me that I must judge by appearance, for they cannot tell their ages, whether they have reached the stature of manhood and womanhood. Then if I am satisfied the banns are published and they are married.

But before a man has reached this stage, he must first pay his father-in-law a dowery for his daughter. The value of the dowery varies, according to the rank of the family into which he would marry. The daughter of a chief might be worth to her father as much as twenty cattle, while a slave might only receive two or three goats This also was a great restraint on early marriages, for a man could not marry until he had time to gain a little wealth, and pay for his wife.

The position of a wife of an aristocrat was one of considerable ease and dignity. She had to work certainly, but she had also a considerable following of slaves to assist her in her labours. But the position of the wives of the commoners was little better than that of slaves. When the rains came on the husband sallied out with his wives. He sat on an ant hill and snuffed, and from this exalted position directed the labours of his wives who hoed.

In this the Ngoni were less noble than their neighbours, for many of the surrounding people think it is a disgrace to send the woman to the gardens. When the harvesting came, the women went to the gardens and reaped and carried home the grain, while the husband prepared the barns. And women pounded the grain and cooked it. While the men had the pleasure of eating it.

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890)1901
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243 forest is cut down and burnt, and another garden cultivated, and so the country is rapidly being deforested. The crop is largely
213 used to make a heady beer, and although Central Africa has been happily saved from the curse of European liquor, the native beer is a great source of big drunken bouts. Heavy drinking, however, does not bring the evil effects that brandy drunkenness would entail. The drink is a nutritious and a very sustaining food. I know some of the old chiefs who are drunk almost every day of their lives by midday, yet they bear up wonderfully. But
[579] these drunken bouts, when whole villages run riot, are the source of nearly all quarrels, adultery, bloodshed, and every outburst of passion. We have had to denounce the beer drinking as a menace
[117] to the social order of the country, and for lack of the strong restraint of the British Government, which forbids the cutting down of trees, we have preached against the deforesting of the land as a wicked improvidence. The native church has, of its own initiative, taken up the question, and enjoined on the members total abstinence, and the preservation of the forests.

461 Three or four months labour are sufficient to provide a family with food for the year, and the sale of a sheep or a heifer will buy all the clothes the family requires. There is therefore little necessity to work, and the tendency is to spend the months lounging about the village, talking and trifling. Now, happily a more
197 industrious period is waking, and larger ambitions for cloth and
461 for stock, are drawing out the men to work. As a mission we
797 insist on the duty of labour, we refuse church privileges to a man if he cannot show that he has been engaged for some months each year at some labour centre doing honest work. No moral good is ever effected by pampering African pride and indolence, and one of the first lessons Christianity has to teach the native, is the dignity of labour, and the absolute necessity for the labourer to be industrious and honest in the discharge of his work. A penny a day is the ordinary wage we give a labourer, and even the great majority of my 220 teachers do not receive more than 1/6 a month.

• 971 Of course many of the Central Africans have industries of their own, smelting, basket making, cloth weaving, wire pulling, and so on. But the Ngoni were a handless people until they got a spear in their hand. Then they drew themselves up as men, and defied the universe. Yet this martial life had an ennobling effect on them. It is a curious thing to notice, and a fact which was

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890) 1901
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borne out in Roman days also, that the handier, and more artful and skilful people have usually a lower social morality than the fighting races. Our Ngoni came to Nyasaland as a moral blessing. The ordinary obscenity of the indigenous people was not for a moment tolerated among the Ngoni. It is very appalling to hear and see how degraded were the Tumbuka into whose land they came. A people among whom virginity was unknown, where family relationship was no defence, where men and women lived in an atmosphere that was charged with vice. But when the Ngoni came, many of the foul practices of the Tumbuka were punished with death. Their obscene dances were prohibited, many of their superstitious customs were banned, and generally a higher type of morality was superimposed.

The aristocratic Ngoni is a gentleman through and through. His word is absolute. When he gives a promise you may fearlessly rely on it. He does not steal, nor does he intrude on your privacy. I have heard the old men storm in a village because some boys stood around staring at me, or speaking. Before a superior they should sit down, and remain silent, or only speak in whispers. When they address you they always give you your family name of honour, or if they don't know it, round off each sentence with a "sire." When you come into a village you sit at the gate of the cattle kraal and wait for your reception. After a long time the elders of the village appear. Their courtesy is that the longer the wait the greater the welcome. For if they come out quickly they seem to say you had better clear out quickly. When they appear they sit down at some distance, and remain silent. You must not speak till you are spoken to. After a decent interval, they come forward, sit down, and leisurely say, "We see you, sire." Then you reply, "Yes, sire." That is the whole courtesy. Conversation may now begin. When you would rise to go, you first of all say, "Remain in peace, sire," and they reply, "Yes, and go thou in peace, sire." It is very courteous and friendly, and they accompany you along the path a little way, and again send you off with salutation.

Their village life is not without interests and amusements. During the day in the head villages there are continual trials in open court—trials which last for hours and days with continual speech-making. In the evenings the kraal echoes with the chorus of village dances. Quite the prettiest and most delightful dance is the village competitive dance which is held during the day. A